

JOHN WANAMAKER

BOOKS BY HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS

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VENIZELOS

PARIS REBORN

RIVIERA TOWNS

JOHN WANAMAKER

PORTS OF FRANCE

EUROPE SINCE 1918

THE NEW MAP OF ASIA

THE NEW MAP OF EUROPE

THE NEW MAP OF AFRICA

FRANCE AND OURSELVES

SONGS FROM THE TRENCHES

AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

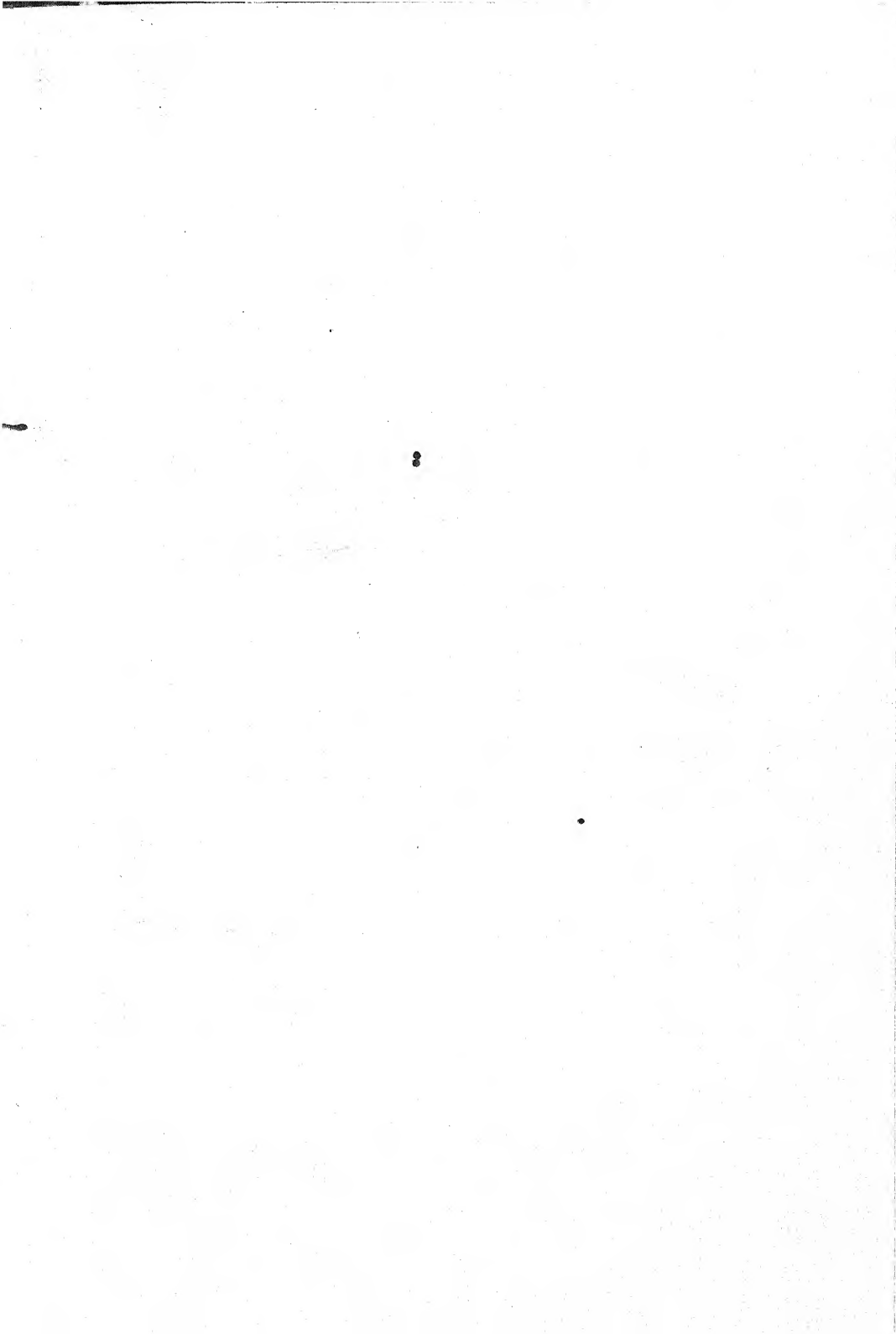
INTRODUCTION TO WORLD POLITICS

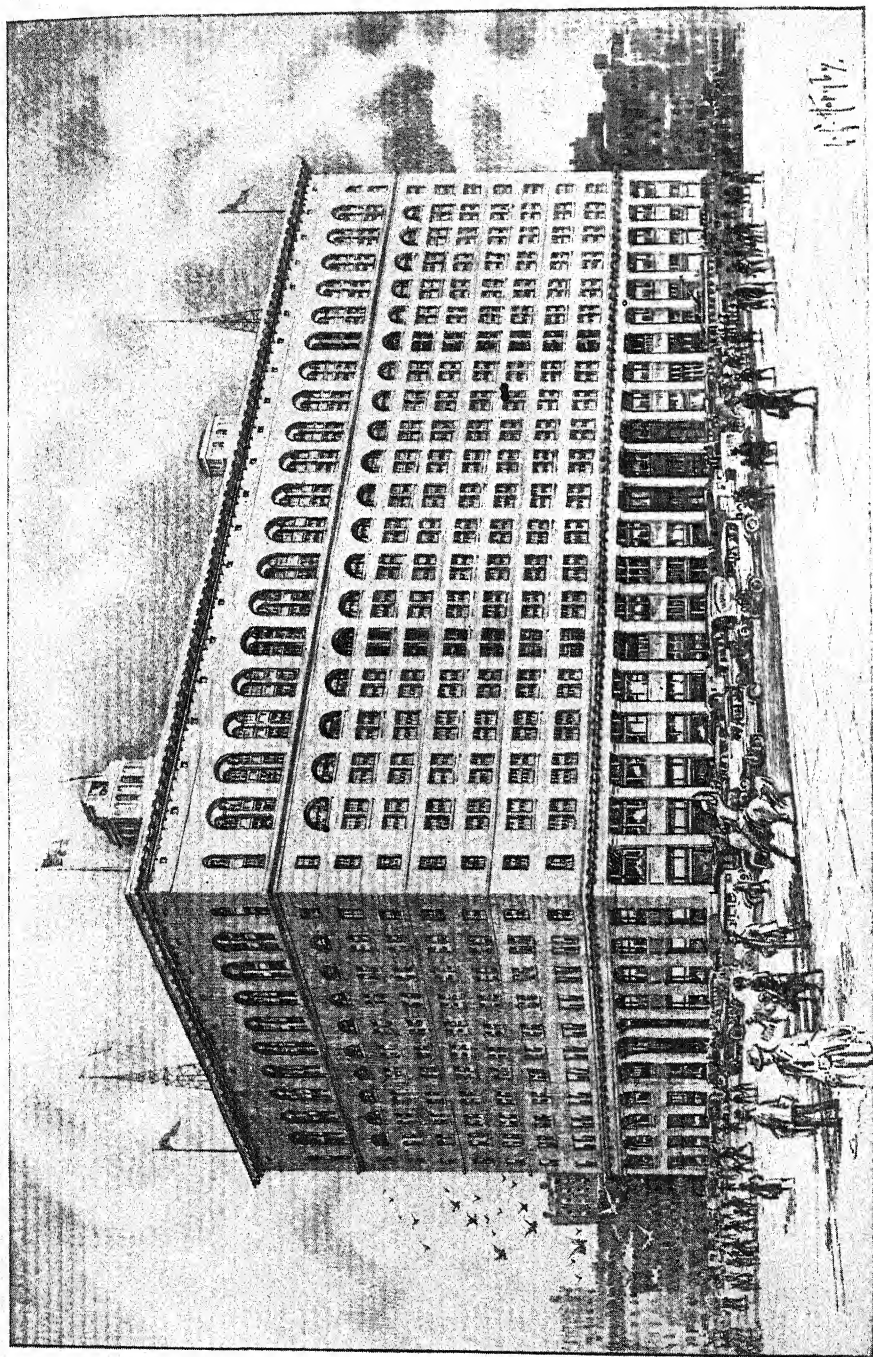
THE BLACKEST PAGE IN MODERN HISTORY

THE FOUNDATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

THE LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE LUXEMBOURG

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF POLAND THE NEAR EAST





THE PHILADELPHIA STORE

# JOHN WANAMAKER

BY  
HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS

ILLUSTRATED



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JOHN WANAMAKER

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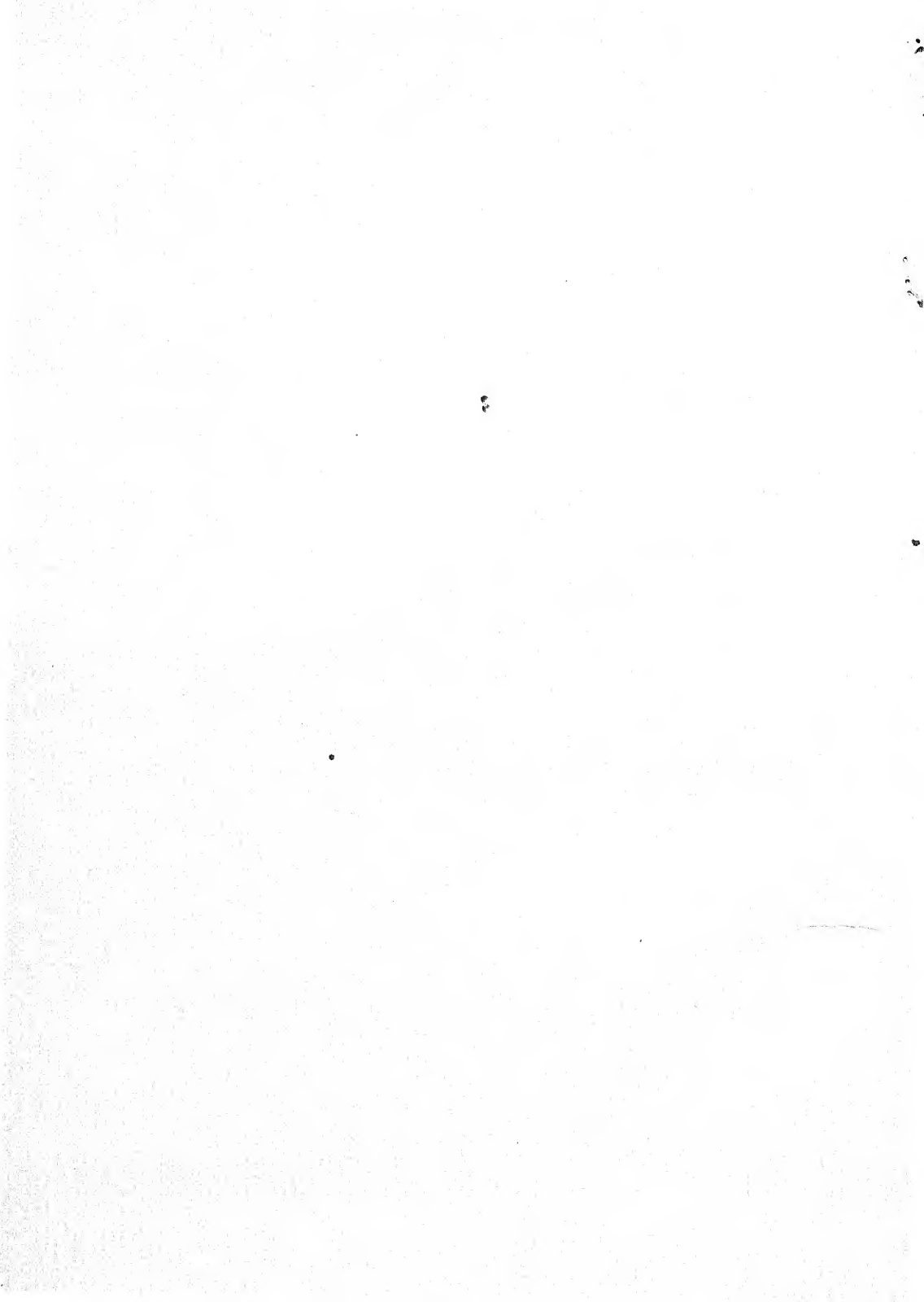
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JOHN WANAMAKER

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CHALLENGE OF NEW YORK

MANY years after his New York store was opened John Wanamaker wrote to a friend: "I think that Philadelphia is narrowing to a man who lives there all the time. New York has many more inspirations and centers of thought." Such an admission could never have been wrung from the Philadelphia merchant during the first half century of his life. The thought had not entered his head. It was an opinion formed—and candidly expressed—only after he had actually lived in New York and fought his way to the front in the business world there. Testimony to the peculiar stimulus of New York was given publicly in an address on September 24, 1907, when he said, "I believe that there is nowhere in the world the same quality of vitality that you get when you touch the people of New York." All men who love to keep doing things have the same feeling. They may say that they hate New York—but they know in their hearts that they are happier there than anywhere else in the United States, happy because they find their happiness in working and New York keeps constantly calling for the best that is in them.

The influence of his New York business venture upon John Wanamaker's capacity for achievement in the last decades of his life was inestimable. It sent new blood coursing through him. It opened up new vistas to him when just continuing to run the store in Philadelphia might have made him grow old comfortably.

"What keeps you young?" a reporter once asked him.

"Sunday afternoons at Bethany and doing business in New York," was the laconic response.

Wanamaker meant what he said. Looking into the faces of children every week was the best tonic he could have. And the problems of retailing in New York City made him "keep humping," as he expressed it—and merrily—until death claimed him. "In Philadelphia, if I wanted to, I could sit in the house I had built," he explained, "but in New York I must go on the stage every day and do my very best to keep the audience."

On another occasion, while riding in Central Park, he put the situation in terse and graphic words: "If the squirrels here didn't keep foraging they would starve; Philadelphia squirrels count on the acorns hitting them on the nose."

The challenge of New York had come to Wanamaker early in his business career. We have seen how Ogden proposed an Oak Hall branch there before he cast in his fortunes with Wanamaker in Philadelphia. Several years later, when Judge Hilton and William Libbey, Stewart's only surviving partner, dissolved the firm of A. T. Stewart & Co., which they had carried on since the founder's death, there had been an opportunity for Wanamaker to become Stewart's successor. On April 15, 1882, Stewart's former secretary, who was still associated with the firm, wrote to Wanamaker requesting an interview, and inclosing the proof of an announcement that they contemplated putting in the press. The liquidation notice said that A. T. Stewart & Co. intended "to discontinue their dry-goods and manufacturing business" and "to offer their stocks of merchandise for sale at attractive prices." De Brot wanted an interview with Wanamaker to lay the whole situation before him. But the time was not yet ripe. Wanamaker had first to assure the stability of his "new kind of store." Ogden

had only recently joined him, and was at Oak Hall devoting himself to men's and boys' clothing.

A. T. Stewart had died on April 10, 1876, just at the moment of the opening of the Grand Depot. After the firm was broken up in 1882, the business at Ninth Street and Broadway was continued under several names until Hilton, Hughes & Co. failed on August 26, 1896. Wanamaker's position then was far different from what it had been fourteen years earlier. He had an able associate to call upon, and his sons were coming to their prime. The inclination to look beyond Philadelphia, which had not been in him before 1889, was now very strong. Only Marshall Field in Chicago equaled John Wanamaker in prestige and in resources as a general merchant. Then, too, the Philadelphia store, although it did the greatest retail business in the country, was not big enough to use to advantage all the energy and talents of three men such as John Wanamaker, Thomas B. Wanamaker, and Robert C. Ogden.

How Wanamaker seized the opportunity we are able to give in his own words:

"In the McKinley campaign I was in the Western part of the state, trying to make speeches, when I received a telegram from the people interested in the receivership that had come with the disasters of some of those who preceded the present business. I drove twelve miles of a Friday night in the moonlight, through Susquehanna County to Montrose, and I slept my way to New York, with a dream of how I could bring Mr. Ogden back again to New York, if I should do what I was urged to do, purchase the old Stewart business. I came that Friday night, or Saturday morning, met Mr. Ogden, who was dazed at the idea of it, but went home Saturday night with the whole thing in my pocket, trying to fit Mr. Stewart's shoes on Mr. Ogden and myself."

It must not be supposed, however, that the deal had been negotiated in one day. After the announcement was given to the press, Judge Russell, of the bankrupt firm, stated that "Mr. Wanamaker had for a long time been eager to get an opening here in New York, and he made us an offer some time ago for our place." But Hilton, Hughes & Co. had been trying to stave off the failure. Three years before Judge Hilton had secured \$1,500,000 on the Stewart building from Mrs. Hettie Green at six per cent., and not long before the failure an additional sum had been borrowed on the business to prevent an assignment. Hilton had also hired away from Wanamaker his advertising manager at a large increase of salary, and there had been a period of temporary prosperity. But carrying the mortgage charges had proved too great a burden. The Wanamaker offer, when first made, had been declined; and it was later a subject of discussion and adjustment among the creditors.

Wanamaker had gone into all the details of the negotiations with his customary thoroughness. The block on which the Stewart building stood was a leasehold from the Sailors' Snug Harbor, which terminated in 1909; and Wanamaker wanted to be sure of a long extension of the lease before he decided to put the Stewart business back on its feet. Henry Morgenthau, through whom the negotiations for the leasehold and buildings were carried on, told the biographer that John Wanamaker had an amazing knowledge of every business and legal aspect of the sale, and that he knew how to drive a close bargain. He ascertained just what his title would be and he had the stocks and stables appraised, before he made a firm offer. It was only the final acceptance of his figure that came when he was campaigning. There had been rumors of the deal for some weeks before it was announced.

The purchase, which the New York newspapers called

"the largest retail transaction ever made in New York," included the Stewart building and leasehold; stables and land at 160 West 10th Street, with wagons, harness, and horses; the entire stocks of the store; and the good will of the business. Mr. Morgenthau considered it the greatest real-estate bargain ever made in New York of his day, provided "the location remained good for retail business." The existing stocks were somewhat depleted and not all of Wanamaker standard, so they were considered by the purchaser a minor part of the transaction. What Wanamaker prized most highly was what Hilton, Hughes & Co. had thrown away—the Stewart name.

Wanamaker believed implicitly in good will built wholly upon the confidence of the public in the merchant. It was a conviction that ruled his life; and his admiration for Stewart was based upon the integrity, high standards of taste, and broad vision of his predecessor more than upon his merchandising genius. A. T. Stewart & Co. had meant much to him in his early business life, and he never tired saying so.<sup>1</sup> But the greatest legacy he received from his association with and study of Stewart was contained in one

<sup>1</sup>A. T. Stewart prophesied shortly before his death that "if young Wanamaker lives, he will be a greater merchant than I ever was." Wanamaker told F. G. Carpenter in October, 1897:

"I met him often when I was a young man. I used to buy goods of him, and I have reason to think that he took a liking to me. One day, I remember, I was in his woolen department buying some stuff for my store here when he asked me if I would be in his store for fifteen minutes longer. I replied that I would. At the end of fifteen minutes he returned and gave me a check for \$1,000, asking me to use it for my mission school in Philadelphia."

On the day of Stewart's death, April 10, 1876, Wanamaker wrote to William Libbey, a member of the firm:

"I am stunned by the totally unexpected announcement of Mr. Stewart's death and tender my sympathies in the loss of a great man who was your personal friend as well as mine. The regard I had for the excellent man prompts me to come to his funeral if it is not altogether private. Can I be of the slightest service to you?

"Yours with great attachment,

"JOHN WANAMAKER."

## JOHN WANAMAKER

sentence from a letter written by the New York merchant to President Grant in 1869, declining the offer of a position in his Cabinet. Stewart had said:

The merchant of the future will be not only an economist and an industrial leader, but also a teacher and a humanitarian.

This is why Wanamaker put in a small tablet on the corner of the Stewart building:

JOHN WANAMAKER

FORMERLY

A. T. STEWART AND CO.

Wanamaker did not need the prestige of the Stewart name to trade upon in his business. His own name sufficed. But he said that it would be a high honor for him to be able to perpetuate in the twentieth century the old Stewart traditions in the history of retail merchandising in America. Stewart had not lived to share in the new era of the general store. But he had dignified the calling of merchant by the goods he sold and the way he sold them, and he had laid the foundation for what was in his time the largest dry-goods business in America by combining the privilege of personal ownership with the responsibility of personal management.

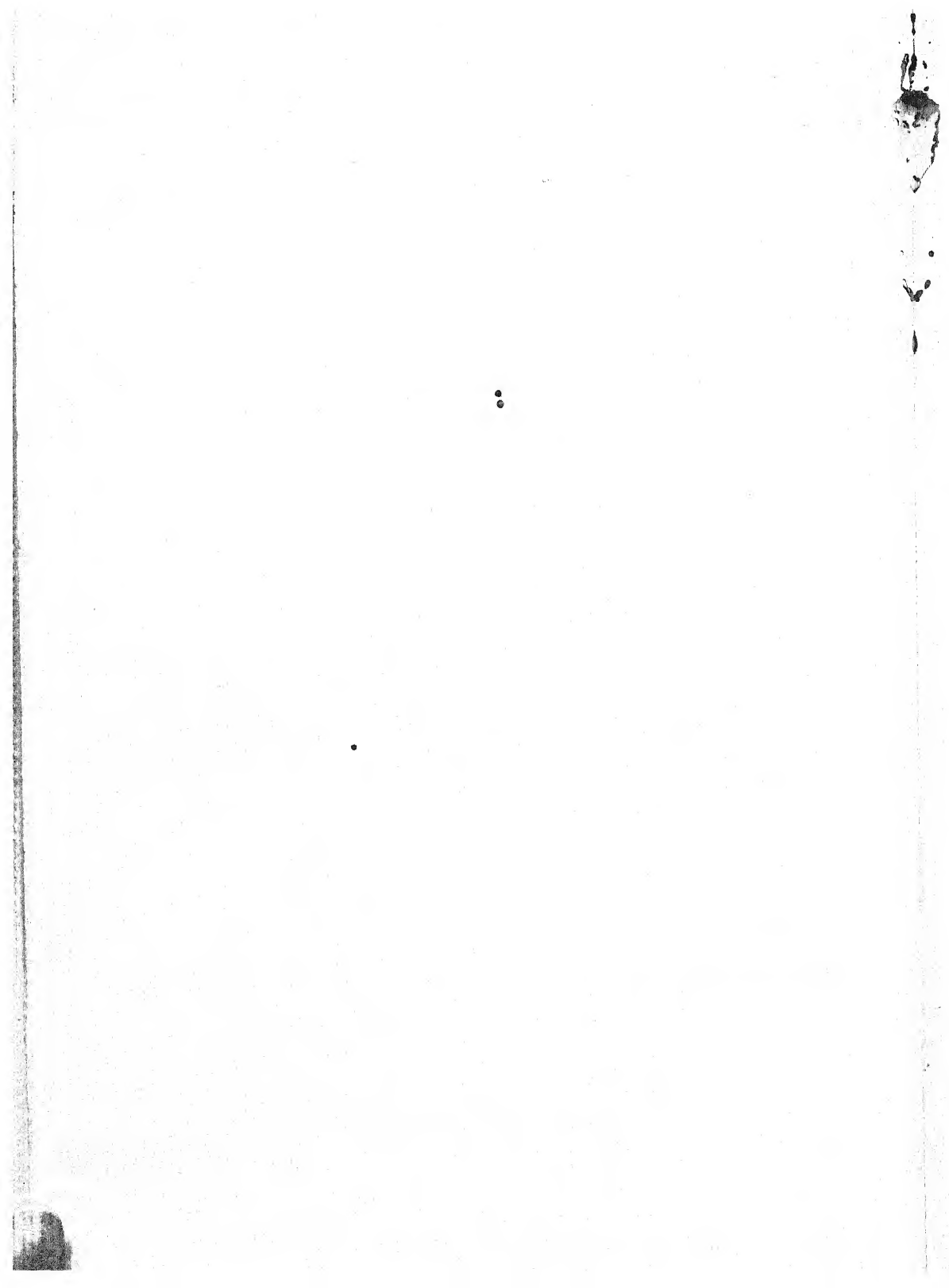
The advent of John Wanamaker in the retail field in New York was cordially greeted by the daily press and by the trade journals. The *Dry Goods Chronicle* spoke of the purchase as "one of the most gigantic mercantile transactions in the history of the world," and said editorially:

The knowledge that John Wanamaker is to carry on the enterprise founded by the greatest merchant that New York ever knew will be received by New Yorkers generally with much satisfaction. . . .

John Wanamaker is probably the one man in the world equal to the task of re-establishing the life work of A. T. Stewart on as high a plane as it occupied when that great merchant died.



COPY OF ENGRAVING OF ALEXANDER T. STEWART BY W. T. BOTHER, NEW YORK  
(From Thomas Hope, private secretary to Mr. Stewart)



If John Wanamaker was "the one man in the world equal to the task of re-establishing the life work of A. T. Stewart," it was not only because of his success in Philadelphia, but also because he alone was willing and able to accept the heritage of Stewart in the down-town location. He had bought Hilton, Hughes & Co. "lock, stock, and barrel," for less than three million dollars. But it was an amazing bargain only if the location could be restored to retailing. Few thought that this was possible. Despite the evidence to the contrary, it was commonly believed that Wanamaker would only technically reopen the Ninth and Broadway business, while he was looking around for an uptown site; and that the Stewart building would be used for a wholesale department, following the trend of Broadway below Fourteenth Street.

The time for a new enterprise in retailing was inauspicious. After four years of a Democratic administration, during which the almost constant depression was laid to the door of low tariff, the party in power had split over the money issue. Bryan's nomination was regarded as a menace by Democrats of the East as well as by Republicans. But there were defections to free silver in Republican ranks also. Before the election manufacturers feared overproduction. Could a worse time have been picked for entering the New York department-store field? McKinley defeated Bryan; but the latter received over six million votes. After election there was still uncertainty in the business world as to the future; for another year would pass before the tariff could be revised. It was hard to believe that Wanamaker would dare to launch the new venture as a great retail business on a par with his Philadelphia store.

But the Wanamaker organization formed its plans and made decisions promptly, like the general staff of an army. Ogden moved to New York, with several lieutenants, and

organized his administrative and selling staff. Most of the employees of Hilton, Hughes & Co. were retained. John Wanamaker and his son Thomas went over every detail of store planning with Ogden and of stocks with the buyers. John Wanamaker personally supervised the display of stocks and the decorations for the opening; and he spent much more time over advertising than over financing. The foreign offices in Paris and London were suddenly confronted with a tremendous task and problem—to buy for New York without preparation or warning.

On Saturday, November 14, 1896, the Wanamaker advertisement, now familiar to a generation in the metropolitan district, made its first appearance in the New York newspapers. It was stated that the least bulky of the Hilton, Hughes stocks had been removed to and sold in Philadelphia, and that the New York store of John Wanamaker would open with new stocks. The announcement continued:

To do this we have drawn largely by cable upon the resources of our Paris organization, and have used for this purpose our foreign corps of more than twenty buyers. Their personal selections for the present season enable us to present the latest and best things from all the European markets.

It is well to remember that this enterprise was begun before the election in a time of great depression. And therefore exceptional bargain-making power was placed in the hands of our buyers. It is thus that we can offer many kinds of goods at prices based upon values of a depressed period.

The reopening of the old Stewart store did much to stimulate retail business and restore confidence in New York before the Christmas season of 1896. We can imagine the joy of the Hilton, Hughes employees, many of the most capable of whom dated back to Stewart days. There was the same relief on the part of wholesalers to whom one

more large market was not only restored, but greatly increased. In an editorial on November 19, three days after the opening, the *New York Times* expressed what everybody felt:

The revival of this great business meant work for factories that would otherwise be shut down; meant occupation for thousands who otherwise would have been idle; and it means that in the face of all the grumbling about hard times there has been one man so well convinced of the renewal of prosperity, that he takes unto himself a duplicate business of one whose astonishing proportions would stagger an average merchant.

A. T. Stewart, a young Irish immigrant with a university background,<sup>1</sup> opened a dry-goods store in 1823 at 283 Broadway, near Chambers Street and opposite the park. He had twelve and a half by thirty feet. The store grew slowly during its first quarter-century, and in 1848 Stewart built a "great marble store" at the corner of Broadway and Chambers Street. Another fifteen years passed, and the retail business of A. T. Stewart & Co. was moved to "upper Broadway"—the block between Ninth and Tenth Streets and Broadway and Fourth Avenue across from Grace Church. The land was leased from the Sailors' Snug Harbor for fifty years. The *New York Tribune* of the day said that "the two stores at lower and upper Broadway which Mr. Stewart has built are the proudest monuments of commercial enterprise in the country. The trade transacted in them is almost fabulous." The Stewart "business palace," as it was called, was the finest business structure in America. When it was completed in 1863, it was also the largest business building in New York. Interest in it,

<sup>1</sup> He was born near Belfast and went through Trinity College, Dublin. His grandfather, who had adopted him when his parents died, sent him to the United States with the intention of having him enter the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton.

from an architectural as well as a storekeeping point of view, was international.<sup>1</sup>

Peter Cooper, whose Union was on the opposite side of Astor Place, supplied most of the iron. Stewart said to Cooper: "My store shall vie with your museum, and people will throng to it as they do to an exhibition." He put no sign on the building, assuming that none needed to be told what it was, and that if they were strangers they would inquire. He had six doors. When asked which was to be the front door, he answered, "All of them are the front door."

The year after he had taken over the Stewart business Wanamaker said to a reporter:

"I have been surprised again and again as I have gone through that building, walking in that dead man's shoes, to find what a knowledge he had of the needs of a mercantile establishment. Stewart put up a building which is to-day, I believe, far better arranged than any of the modern structures that are being erected."

In his first issue of the *Philadelphia Store News*, in 1883, Wanamaker put Stewart's picture in the middle of the first page and wrote under it:

The first thought of a big store brings to mind A. T. Stewart. He it was who first formulated the system for many varieties of goods under one roof; and he it was who organized the best house of its kind, so far as known to this century. His greatness as a merchant none can dispute. The great concerns of Paris never equaled the product of Stewart's genius, nor do they to-day rise to the proportions of some of our stores.

<sup>1</sup> That Stewart should have moved his business uptown and should have conceived and completed the building at Ninth and Broadway during the first thirty months of the Civil War is in itself of great historical interest, just as the founding and rapid extension of the Wanamaker business in Philadelphia during those same thirty months is significant. The Civil War did not paralyze or disrupt business in the United States even temporarily. Retail merchandising kept growing when the Union was in danger just as if there had been no war. A monument of Civil War days, the Stewart building stands as a witness to the fact that no cataclysm affects for long or seriously the ordinary pursuits of the human race.

But the admiration for Stewart, the shopkeeper, which he retained to the end of his life, did not blind the Wanamaker of later years to the defects and limitations of the man to whose business he had succeeded in New York. In an unpublished interview with S. S. McClure in 1912, stenographic notes of which are in the private files, McClure spoke of the fact that "first-rate merchandising is not over sixty years old." Wanamaker answered:

It is not forty years old. Stewart didn't have the idea. He was a shrewd money-making man and that was his life, just that. First, his education fitted him to do better things than people who just fall into things by accident. He fell in by accident. He had the opportunity to do the best thing in New York City, but he walked around as a horse used to in the old brickyard when I was a boy and ground the clay by turning a wheel. He never got beyond that. His friendship for Grant brought him into public notice, but he wasn't strong enough to just simply lay down his business and do something in the public service.

I never forget that his success was in his personal attention to the details of the business. Others could have done it just as well. It was a curious trait in a man who achieved a fine degree of success. He could have had others to look after the details—they have to be looked after, but few attend to sweeping up, and that's what Stewart did.

All my recollection of him in his retail store was in sweeping up. That was his way. I would go in and want to see him and I would find him on the floor going about looking at a pile of dress goods. He had a woman's voice and he would say, "You had six pieces of this goods yesterday and they do not seem to have been sold. You must sell them." Then he would go to the next place with a paper in his hand and say, "You had twelve of these hats three weeks ago, now you have eleven." That sort of thing.

A man with all his power ought to be way up—better throw those hats away than to spend his time on them.

The kind of business he did was magnificent in its quality of merchandise and fairness, but there was a lot of foolishness in it which couldn't exist in any business to-day.

Wanamaker went into the retail field in New York with

his eyes open. We find in his papers admirable studies of the New York department stores of 1896. There is also a report on the great specialty shops which had to be counted upon as competitors. But Wanamaker had confidence in himself. He believed that it would be possible to do in New York what he had done in Philadelphia, and the very fact of the kind of competition he would encounter, coupled with his late entry into the field, made him look forward eagerly to the fun of demonstrating the efficiency of Wanamaker merchandising policy and Wanamaker advertising in New York. Too often had it been said that John Wanamaker was the child of fortune whose enormous business was due to being first in the field and to a lucky choice of what became in time the best location in Philadelphia. People who didn't like him were trying to find every reason for Wanamaker's position in the world except the real one.

The challenge of New York was fascinating because in New York only the man himself would count. He was going into competition with long-established general stores and specialty shops. His location was regarded as a hopeless handicap, even when he started at Ninth Street and Broadway.

When the project was mooted, one of Wanamaker's friends, who had business interests in New York, told him bluntly: "Don't do it down there on Broadway. You won't have a ghost of a chance."

Wanamaker laughed heartily and put an affectionate hand on the friend's shoulder.

"Some day I may have to thank you heartily for those words. As it is, I am your debtor. Don't fail to call on me if you ever want anything."

Much relieved, the friend said: "Then you will listen to common sense! How glad every one will be."

"No, no, it is uncommon sense that I have my ear out for.

You know that only that would get my attention. What you have said is what all the good friends told me in 1861 and 1876 and 1877. They said it was madness, what I proposed doing. But where would I be if they had persuaded me not to try? So when you come along, and other friends—with the same story—I feel in my bones that I should go ahead.”

The spirit in which John Wanamaker went to New York is well illustrated by an answer he once gave to a young man who wanted to know the formula for success. Wanamaker told him, “Go and pray, ‘Dear God, give me the toughest job you have.’”

## CHAPTER II

### ADVERTISING PIONEER

WE have told the story of the spectacular advertising exploits of the first fifteen years of Wanamaker's career. Advertising was an indispensable factor in the young merchant's success. In his twenties he showed the qualities that gave him a commanding place in the history of modern advertising—courage, persistence, honesty, originality, a sense of value, and an open mind. He was a constant student of human nature; he used experience as a teacher; and he was never content with the results of his efforts. In ten years he built up the largest retail clothing business in America because he had believed that good will was an asset which justified looking upon advertising as a capital investment.

When the people came to know where Oak Hall was, by dint of much telling them, he had something to say—always new—about the goods he was offering and about how he was selling them. His long fight to establish new business principles led him—perhaps at first unconsciously—to discover three things, the superiority of the daily newspaper as a medium for reaching the public, the practicability of buying more newspaper space than any American before his time had ever dreamed of using without increasing his selling costs, and the necessity of inventing a new way of writing advertisements.

Wanamaker's first advertising was in daily newspapers. While he never ceased trying other mediums, it quickly became his fixed conviction that he could not afford to let

a working day pass without using the newspapers. During the first decade the Oak Hall newspaper advertisements gradually increased in size. Other retail merchants followed the same policy, but he always kept ahead of them. In the early 1870's he found that he needed more newspaper space to educate the public in the radically new merchandising principles of which he had become the American exponent. When he abandoned specializing in men's and boys' clothing to enter the field of general merchandising, fifteen years of bold and thoughtful use of printers' ink were behind him. The far greater volume of retail business that came with a rush at the Grand Depot gave him more money to spend in advertising and he was carrying goods that were more varied and of greater general interest.

Once the new kind of store was successfully launched and his ideas of doing business were being adopted by other merchants, John Wanamaker was ready for further pioneering. In September, 1874, he had used the first half-page advertisement in a newspaper to set forth in detail the principles upon which his business had been founded and which had been developed and practiced at Oak Hall. This advertisement was copyrighted. Because of content as well as size, the advertisements of this educational campaign were an innovation. They read like news articles. The same departure in custom occurred again in announcing the opening of the Grand Depot in 1876 and of the new kind of store in 1877. In December, 1879, during the great reception given to General Grant on his return from girdling the globe, appeared the first full-page mercantile advertisement in an American newspaper.

Two decades of testing and preparation passed before Wanamaker was ready to buy a whole page for every

week day of the year, thus creating another precedent in American journalism.<sup>1</sup> Throughout these twenty years he remained the pioneer among American merchants. He had dispensed with agents and had gone directly to the Philadelphia newspaper proprietors, bargaining with them for a definite amount of space, on contract, for periods from six months to a year. He literally leased his daily space. Others followed where he led. The custom of buying daily space by contract became established. It enabled newspapers to increase their size as they increased their circulation. They began to look upon retail merchants as their principal source of revenue.

During the first quarter-century of developing his general store Wanamaker did not neglect other means of advertising than the daily newspaper, all of which contributed powerfully in the development of the style and content of the full newspaper page as we have it today. In his life-long study of advertising there was "no day without its line." We have spoken elsewhere of the establishment of his own printing-house in 1876, which issued one million copies of a booklet about Oak Hall and the Grand Depot at the time of the Centennial Exhibition. Wanamaker's printers put his ideas in type, and he saw how they looked on the printed page before he published them. No other merchant had ever thought of doing this. He tried full pages in weekly and monthly periodicals. This is how *The Farm Journal* originated. It was first published at the

<sup>1</sup> On January 2, 1899, the Associated Press carried the following item, dated Philadelphia: "John Wanamaker has announced that he has entered into a contract to use one page in the *Philadelphia Record* daily, except Sunday, for one year at a cost of \$100,000. It is the first full-page contract ever entered into with a daily newspaper and the largest amount involved in an advertising contract of this kind up to this time." This was soon followed by similar contracts with other newspapers in Philadelphia and New York.

Grand Depot in 1876, with the Wanamaker advertising page as its financial underwriting.<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker used full pages in the *Century* and *Scribner's* in the early 1880's.<sup>2</sup> In connection with his book business his advertisements had nation-wide circulation, and were copied everywhere. He conceived the idea of store magazines for "ladies"—as women were then called. The *Philadelphia Store News*—a complete newspaper—was published first in 1883, devoted to items of interest about the Wanamaker business. *Everybody's Journal*, a little periodical issued as an advertisement for Oak Hall, grew into *Everybody's Magazine*, a pioneer in the ten-cent field.<sup>3</sup> Catalogues that were precursors of the huge volumes now issued by mail-order houses, booklets, circulars, and cards, calling attention to sales or specific categories of merchandise, went out through the mails.

These undertakings, all innovations in themselves, some in the idea and others in the style, were a parallel effort to the evolution of newspaper copy. John Wanamaker's advertising department started as a laboratory, and it has always been that. Through experimenting came knowledge. The staff grew rapidly. But there was never a time that the head of the business did not take an active part in inspiring the experiments and in studying them. Blazing the trail in newspaper advertising was a long and ardu-

<sup>1</sup> The *Farm Journal* is still the most widely circulated of the national farm publications. The A B C report of December, 1925, gave it a circulation of 1,144,148 and an advertising rate of \$2,750 a page. See above, vol i, pp. 197-8.

<sup>2</sup> In *Scribner's* for July, 1880, appeared the first advertisement of a general store in a magazine of national circulation, which took the form of a "Stray Leaf from a Young Lady's Journal." In the *Century* for December, 1882, John Wanamaker in the third person told the country what he had accomplished until his business "to-day is the largest on the continent. He deals in everything almost. People in the most distant states and territories write to him for everything. If he does not happen to deal in the article they want, even then, sometimes, he gets it for them, and takes the risk of being right."

<sup>3</sup> See vol. i, pp. 196-7.

ous task. The full-page presentation of what the Wanamaker stores had to offer did not just happen.

The consistent use of large newspaper space necessitated an abandonment of the old methods of writing advertisements. The sums involved in contracts for this space, when totaled up and joined with other advertising expenses, would never have been justified and have proved successful had there not been from the first full value received.<sup>1</sup> Long lists of articles, with prices, repeated daily, did not attract sufficient customers to pay for the space. The people were tiring of jingles, dialogues, letters, and boasts. The reiteration of business principles was not a luxury that could be indulged in frequently. Extravagant praise of merchandise John Wanamaker would never tolerate any more than he tolerated overselling. He believed, as he put it early in life, that "the best advertisement is a pleased customer." To create good will, as we have seen, was his reason for regarding advertising as an investment. This conception made him hostile to the constant announcement of sales. Wanamaker was not interested in moving auction lots and bargain goods upon which he could not put the guaranty of his name. So there had to be some new idea.

The idea that came to him was simplicity itself. A newspaper was for news—people read it for that; but the news must be accurate and worth publishing, or the people would not read it. In three years a mammoth store had grown

<sup>1</sup> In 1887, Wanamaker said: "My plan for fifteen years has been to buy so much space in a newspaper and fill it up with what I wanted. I would not give an advertisement in a newspaper of 400 circulation for 5,000 dodgers or posters. I deal directly with the publisher. I say to him: How long will you let me run a column of matter in your paper for \$100 or \$500, as the case may be. I let him do the figuring and if I think he is not trying to make more than his share I give him the copy. I lay aside the profits of a particular line of goods for advertising purposes. The first year I laid aside \$3,000; last year I laid aside and spent \$40,000. I have done better this year and shall increase that sum as the profits warrant it. I owe my success to the newspapers, and to them I shall freely give a certain profit of my yearly business."

out of the Grand Depot, with an amazing variety of merchandise, whose daily happenings were well worth reporting. He decided to put before Philadelphians every day merchandising news, written in plain, straightforward language, and printed in clear, readable type—illustrated, too, if you please! On his desk forty years ago was the Chinese motto, "One picture is worth 10,000 words."

On April 3, 1880, Wanamaker advertising threw overboard all precedents, and became news. To his advertising manager Wanamaker gave these instructions:

"Your sole business as a writer of our advertising is to find out the truth regarding the merchandise and to tell it in plain words as briefly as you can."<sup>1</sup>

The 1880's were years of patient experimenting. The new form of advertising was not easy to inaugurate or to persist in. Wanamaker had able helpers, but what he had in mind to accomplish for a long time eluded them and him. If there is anything harder in the world than stating facts interestingly it is getting facts to state. The business was growing rapidly, merchandising conditions were being revolutionized, and competitors were springing up whom it was hard to meet on the daily basis of simply giving information to the public. Wealth and honors came to the founder of the business, and he gained nation-wide reputation as a merchant pioneer. But he was still far from the goal he had set before him—the universal acceptance of the identity of interests of merchant and customer. In the full tide of prosperity, with a great organization, it was far harder to hew to the line than it had been in the

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker never modified this unique conception of the content of advertising. He told the Advertising Clubs of the World, on June 26, 1916, that after fifty-five years of experience he had "not been able to discover that there was any other rightful function of advertising than to do just one thing—to inform the public that the merchant had brought in certain goods, with a proper description of them, and what the honest prices were."

earlier days. In buying and selling the fight was hard enough to match promise with performance; in advertising the effort was almost superhuman. But Wanamaker accomplished it because he was a student and because there was no limit to his alertness and courage. By insisting upon rigid adherence to the rules he had laid down his advertising was honest. The public took him at his word.

After his return to the active management of his business, with the Postmaster-Generalship behind him, he said:

"Genuinely good advertising must give in wording something that will be read about the goods that are wanted and that will present clearly and exactly what the goods are. It is generally known that common advertising is like barrels of seed in which half of the seed is dead. If all advertising were believed and the goods of the value stated, stores could be made twice as large and business twice as good. It used to be said that it was only necessary to put the name of the store in the newspaper, repeating it over and over for emphasis, that the space might be filled in a striking manner, and thus get the name of the store known to the public—it was thought this was the whole of advertising. Now we know that publicity has a larger and finer field than this—that it must be informative, educative, productive—in a word, scientific."

And to a young newspaper reporter, to whom he had offered a position on his staff, he wrote:

I wish you could see as I see the elevation of business standards that must inevitably follow proper preparation of business literature. That is much more worthy of your best self than the society column, marriage and divorce articles, theatrical news and city gossip, and half the incidents that make up a writer's work on a daily newspaper. Commercial writing is much more than mere advertising. Only a very few as yet see that business writing is a different thing from the humbuggery of varnishing

unsalable goods with a pen that must always write white and never black.

In this "proper preparation of business literature" he had become a master craftsman. Because he possessed what the French call the *sens de la mesure* and because to this rare gift were added deftness and charm, he was able to challenge the emulation of his cleverest writers with masterpieces like this:

#### SILK-AND-WOOL LANSDOWNES

Made in old Philadelphia, not far from the Wanamaker Store. We always knew William F. Reade, and were the first to introduce and stand for the first Lansdownes that he made.

They have grown better and better and we always have the pick of them and cannot sell them for less than \$1.25 a yard, unless we obtain them surreptitiously, cut the numbers off the edges, and sell them at cost as advertisements, as some others do.

About once in six months we get "the plum" of the mill, in the "seconds" of probably 5,000 pieces, made in the half-year. We now have 292 long and short pieces; and there are 152 pieces in blues, blacks, browns, and greens, for New York, and they go on sale this morning in the Sub-Station Store.

These \$1.25 Lansdownes for 75c. per yard. It would take a skilled expert to find a thick thread or a skipped stitch, and you will say when you see them, thank Mr. Reade fifty cents a yard for being so particular.

After he extended his business to New York in 1896, where he realized that advertising was the whole battle in getting a foothold, the advertising staffs in both stores were largely increased. Wanamaker committed himself to an advertising program that soon involved the outlay of over a million dollars a year. His publicity departments became like newspaper staffs, and those who gathered the advertising copy were instructed to go out through the stores and see and study the merchandise before writing about it. "Tell

the truth even though it hurts," he admonished them.<sup>1</sup> He declared that the merchandise had to come up to the standard of the advertising, and that it was the task of the buyers, if they wanted their departments mentioned and their offerings featured, to have goods worthy of finding a place on the Wanamaker page in the newspapers. To indicate what equipment he deemed necessary for his advertising writers and to help them in doing their work he picked out books on history, art, taste, and merchandising materials, and had these placed in a special library.

Wanamaker's conception of the rôle of advertising in his business made him an exacting taskmaster. Those whom he chose for his associates in this department had to know how to interpret his ideas, to express his personality, to uphold the Wanamaker name. He once told one of his advertising managers that allowing him to prepare the Wanamaker page was giving him a responsibility similar to that of the engineer of a passenger train. He must go at full speed, but he must be alert for signals; for to him was entrusted the life of the business. From a mistake might result a wreck, entailing tremendous loss. The advertising manager had to be, as Wanamaker put it, "a good merchant and an alert student." To this end he gave his people every facility for their work, his own time and talents in conference and criticism, and the opportunity to observe what was going on in the world by travel. This is best illustrated by a letter of instruction to one of the staff whom he sent abroad in the summer of 1905. He wrote:

Jog around all sorts of places and jot down every suggestion. Ideas are what you want and when abroad I have always found them as plenty as blackberries in summertime. They are in newspapers, signs, circulars, color, shape, wording. The big and the little stores fairly knock me

<sup>1</sup>For example: "The patterns are bad, but the article will give good wear"; "Look well, and everybody is wearing them, but they are not guaranteed for long wear and not recommended for rough wear."

over with their leaping frogs, big and little. Everything you get will come in good sometime. Some days you will catch more than others—much depends on being well and in the spirit of fishing. Do not fret because some places and days at a time do not yield much—the next step you take around the corner may be to a rich find. Raking London somewhat and Paris much will be quite sufficient.

We find an illuminating entry in his diary, the year of which we do not give, for obvious reasons:

Just now I am up to my eyebrows in the reorganizing of the scientific advertising and editorial bureau. Mr. — is on his vacation and returns on Monday, when I disconnect him from his writing sanctums and place him as assistant to Mr. — to study merchandise and to collect information on all classes of goods and then to getting things to the writing desk of the staff that I shall be the chief of myself till I get it all going well again.

No greater pioneering was ever accomplished by John Wanamaker than in New York, where prior to his appearance the advertisements of the local stores consisted mostly of bare enumerations of the articles for sale fringed with a conspicuous row of prices. It was claimed that metropolitan shoppers would not take time to read what competitors derisively called "the Quaker's solemn dissertations," and that the New York public was the rock on which the Wanamaker style of advertising was destined to be wrecked. But the Wanamaker "store news," printed with disregard of expense in all the leading dailies, week after week and month after month, "vindicated the judgment of its originator," as a New York trade journal put it, and ended in being imitated.

Wanamaker had in New York a problem that could be solved in no other way than by consistently heavy advertising. Against long-established competitors he had to build a clientele out of nothing. His downtown location<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> In using this expression the biographer must qualify it by stating that Wanamaker always stoutly maintained that Ninth and Broadway was central to the metropolitan area, and was not "downtown." See below, chap. viii.

the absence of good will in the purchase he had made necessitated attracting customers to Ninth and Broadway who were skeptical of the success of his experiment of reviving a defunct business and who knew little, if anything, of what the Wanamaker name meant in merchandising. He was thinking of himself in New York when he said to young men in an editorial:

Do not presume that your name on a sign is worth anything, even if you bear the name of a worthy father or have inherited a business of his making. Your knowledge, integrity, and ability must be proven and appear before you claim credit and position for what was done by your predecessors.

Wanamaker's success in creating a permanent trade in New York has been the result of the service his store rendered and the goods it sold. But this confidence could not be gained until he had succeeded in attracting shoppers. Getting the people to come to his store was due to the skill with which he won their confidence. A new kind of advertising captured and held their interest because it proved to be what he claimed for it, "a simple statement of facts."

The New York newspapers owe a great debt to John Wanamaker, who led the way in the use of large space in daily advertising. Before the end of his first decade he was spending half a million dollars in week-day advertising in metropolitan newspapers. John Wanamaker never advertised in Sunday newspapers, and in this policy he was followed by Marshall Field. But he paved the way for the enormous expansion in daily advertising. When he died, Wanamaker had been in business in New York less than thirty years. During that time the increase in advertising far more than kept pace with the increase in circulation of New York newspapers. If we take out of the reckoning the Sunday editions, in which he was not inter-

ested, he was by far the largest consistent advertising patron not only of metropolitan, but also of suburban, New York newspapers. And he gave the business managers of the dailies as helpful a selling argument as he had given life-insurance agents, when, out of his rich experience, he declared:

"The only advertising of direct and instant benefit to both merchant and customer is in the daily newspaper of known circulation. All others are vanity and vexation of spirit. To have learned this fact has greatly helped my enterprises, though often there has been serious discomfort in saying so publicly and in breaking away from posters, leaflets and weeklies."

John Wanamaker's adventures in advertising and his philosophy of advertising afford a temptation which the biographer must resist; for a whole volume could be written about them. In advertising he was interested and to advertising he gave personal supervision from the day he entered business for himself up to the last day in his office, sixty-one years later. None of his many activities brings out more clearly the characteristics that made him the unique merchant of his time. His advertising demonstrated his fertility, his zeal for study, his attention to detail, his knowledge of human nature, his honesty, his boldness, his persistence, and his far-sightedness.

He was probably the first great advertiser who proved by example that advertising was one item of expense that a merchant could never afford to cut down, no matter what the circumstances. This truth he expressed forcefully in an interview with Frank G. Carpenter in October, 1897. He said:

"When the times are hard and people are not buying, is the very time that advertising should be the heaviest. You want to get the people in to see what you have to sell,

and you must advertise to do that. When the times are good they will come of their own accord. But I believe in advertising all the time. I never stop advertising."

But his greatest service to advertising was in convincing the people that they could believe what reputable merchants said. He never let up on his war against dishonest advertising, and he was the first to insist upon the responsibility of publishers for the advertisements their papers carried. Periodicals multiplied and advertising grew in scope and volume, but the evils of the early days were not wholly corrected. He felt that "people who buy goods from stores all over the country are demanding the removal of the poison gases that have caused so many to begin to wonder whether advertising is a good thing for the customer or not." In a clarion call to the convention of the Advertising Clubs of the World in Philadelphia in June, 1916, Wanamaker asked that they take steps to do away with misrepresentation, exaggeration, and extravagance. He made three pointed queries:

1. Who will stand up and say plain words to halt the magazines and newspapers which insist upon great sums of money to be paid for advertising without taking any steps to ascertain whether qualities or prices are as stated?
2. Who will make up the committee to take yesterday's and to-day's advertisements in the newspapers and compare their statements strictly and expertly with the merchandise that is offered, and find out what is true and what is false?
3. Who among the newspaper publishers and managers in this convention will stand up and declare that they will accept no more advertising at any price whatever until it has been proved true?

Of all Americans he was the most qualified to issue this broadcast. For he was able to write in the last year of his life:

Though I have been a student of advertising for fifty years and more, I feel I have much to learn. But this one thing I know: It may take longer to reach the point of success by straightforward advertising, but when you once get halfway up the mountain toward it, you will find encouragement to keep on to the top in a straight path.

## CHAPTER III

### MERCANTILE PIONEER

THE element of adventure in business kept John Wanamaker young in spirit and effectiveness when most of his contemporaries had passed the zenith of their powers. To him achievement was always something ahead, because before any immediate objective was attained he had found a new goal a long way off. He believed that the secret of enjoying life was in thinking of the future, toiling for the future, trusting in the future—with face aglow. He loved his business and gloried in being a merchant. No field of human activity, he often declared, was more fruitful in contributing to the progress of mankind, and none gave wider play to the imagination. It was a career that fitted the dreamer and the explorer.

That many of John Wanamaker's ideas were impracticable and fantastic did not bother him. He was not afraid to give expression to them—and then laugh at himself. But until he was satisfied with his own answer to the question, "Why not?" he did not dismiss an idea. He believed that he was living in an age of miracles and he had the faith that removed mountains. Frequently we find him telling his employees that although "not every egg in our nest becomes a chicken," there is always the potentiality present. "An active mind, seeking new ways of doing old things and new and greater things to do, makes life a romantic reality." Curiosity was no fault, but rather a virtue, if one did not stop there, for "man passes to achievement over the threshold of curiosity." He once told a school graduating class

that the formula of success was O. P. B. + O. P. M.—other people's brains + other people's money. This raised a laugh. But the students grasped the significance of the formula when he stressed honesty and the ability to inspire confidence, and added that his formula worked only if the one who used it knew how to dream and was willing to dare.

As great general stores developed and became competitors, it was natural that they should be proud of their innovations just as newspapers were proud of their "scoops." The use of the news form of advertising, of which we have just spoken, gave them the opportunity to herald innovations. In the early days of telling his story in the newspapers Wanamaker had unconsciously made popular featuring achievements. He did not do it to boast. The man who is looking ahead, thinking of the future, making plans for greater things, as he was always doing, gets no satisfaction and wastes no time in dwelling on past performances. Reiterating his pioneering work in the field of retail merchandising had to be done in the great fight against the merchandising methods of his day and in the campaign to change the attitude of the customer toward the merchant.

Years ago members of Wanamaker's staff began to compile a list of "Wanamaker Firsts," to be used for advertising purposes. Published from time to time, on anniversary occasions, in the store advertisements, the chronological record of "Wanamaker Firsts" demonstrated the unique position of the Philadelphian in the history of the evolution of retail merchandising. The bare list of "Wanamaker Firsts," from 1861 to 1922, would fill many pages. We shall not attempt to enumerate them.<sup>1</sup> Of some of these innovations we have spoken where they have their place in the story of the man's business career or where they seem

<sup>1</sup> See Bibliography.

to us to illustrate his character and the scope of his activities. Here we must content ourselves with the simple statement that the new things John Wanamaker thought of and introduced in his stores kept him a mercantile pioneer throughout his life. Scarcely a year passed without his name being associated with one or more radical departures in methods of retailing, in widening the influence and multiplying the activities of the general store, in improving service to customers, and in advancing the welfare of employees.

The philosophy of John Wanamaker as a mercantile pioneer can best be expressed by quotations from three store editorials written during the last years of his life:

That picture of a little child which the artist painted fifteen years ago is just the same as when he sent it here. It has not grown the least bit. There is a difference between a picture and this living thing of a store that has in it the life of its thousands of workers and tens of thousands of people that it serves. As all of us are all the time wishing and trying to do more for one another, there is a constant quickening at the roots and up above them signs of growth to the very top of this mercantile tree.

A celebrated Englishman advised his son at school to "be a whole man at everything." Many a boy so splits himself up to fit into athletics, school societies, glee clubs, etc., that he is not a whole boy at anything and only a middling boy at everything. How we would hate ourselves if we were keeping only a middling-good store.

So many in this world are like the old miller at the lake, off the country road, who cared for nobody—"no, not he"—because nobody cared for him. The whole world will serve you if you prove that you are honestly trying to be of service to it. "Only life can give life," some one has said. We must be interested in other people if we expect them to be interested in us. This huge hive of happy industry, full of busy bees, finds every day new gardens from which to gather good things of benefit to the public.

In his own words, and in homely fashion, the merchant has told us that growth is the test of vitality, that aimless

diffusion of energy is a soporific, and that the desire to serve others is the incentive to progress.

The Wanamaker idea of business, which gave the reason for—and is at the same time the record of—his pioneering was tersely put under seven heads in an advertisement that appeared in facsimile of Wanamaker's handwriting in Philadelphia and New York in October, 1903. The merchant wrote:

1. To establish a new kind of store, based upon a system of business free from defective old methods and lack of methods, and upon principles by which it must steadily grow better.

2. To combine certain carefully chosen businesses under one roof and one co-operative administration, maintain the individuality of each section as much as if it were in a separate building, and thereby construct a commercial enterprise obviously different from what is popularly known as "a department store."

3. To specialize in each class of business undertaken, improve upon it, perfect it, and make it superior in the course of time to any separate business of its kind.

4. To build up a system with reciprocity between buyer and seller as the fundamental principle.

5. To maintain accuracy and straightforwardness in all transactions large or small, without considering the profit in any one instance.

6. To provide only trustworthy merchandise.

7. To advance the welfare of those employed, by means of healthful accommodations, of continuing the shortening of hours and granting summer recreations, and by raising higher and higher the standards to make a business life honorable and self-respecting, thus enabling, through a system of training, diligent and earnest people to develop business ability and to find careers, contentment, and remuneration in daily toil.

After his death, one of his closest business associates stated that none could understand John Wanamaker—much less get a comprehensive picture of him—because his life was a series of water-tight compartments, each inclosing definite activities and interests, and that none who worked with him in any one of these compartments entered the others. But

all men who leave an indelible imprint upon their age are like that. Their genius is manifest in whatever they turn their hand to. And secretiveness is the inevitable corollary of their success, if not its explanation. Their outstanding quality is that of leadership. They furnish ideas; they direct the efforts that are made by delegated lieutenants to carry them out. They have not the time, and they do not feel the need, to correlate the parts of the mechanism they are directing. Each helper carries on in his appointed field. Each helper is at times dumfounded by the chief's intimate knowledge and mastery in the specific work of the subordinate, and at others bewildered by the revelation of what he deems poor judgment or a lack of knowledge on the part of the chief. So it is that the biographer hears of flashes of genius—and of blunders. Robert C. Ogden, who was an executive officer of consummate ability but who had not Wanamaker's genius for leadership and gift of imagination, used to say that he had never been able to make up his mind whether John Wanamaker was a very great man with amazing defects or an ordinary man with amazing talents. Could not every executive officer say the same of his chief? The very greatness of the qualities of leaders makes their defects stand out. The mistakes of a genius, the petty things about a great man, are more easily noticed and longer remembered than those of ordinary folk.

Chips fall thick and fast, and then trees crash, before the ax of the pioneer. He does not pause to clear away and make an easily-traveled road. He has others to do that for him. His eyes are ahead; if he be a true pioneer, as Wanamaker was, there is always a trail to be blazed. This is one picture we get of Wanamaker from his correspondence, from his diaries, from the lips of those who worked with him. And it was Wanamaker's own conception of his

rôle in merchandising. He was always going ahead full tilt. He was happiest when confronted with a new problem, when challenged, when some "wild idea" entered his head which was no longer wild after he was through with it.

But it was not all just feverish restlessness, unbounded energy impatient of the limitations of time and strength, and a swift succession of dreams and deeds. By tying up the loose ends as he went along the whole world was able to enjoy permanently the fruits of his pioneering. He was a constructive builder upon the foundations he dug, and in the course of building he found the leads to further pioneering. A man who is devoted to his principles, who loves the ideas that are children of his brain, is not content with simply announcing them; the true originator knows that his work is never done, for his creative instinct calls upon him to nurture that to which he has given birth. A baby is indeed "nothing but a cry."

In the 1880's Wanamaker wrote to one of his sisters from Holland:

Is the diamond-cutter to be envied? I've been watching one. He cuts and polishes. Then he puts aside the stone on which his skill has been expended and which he will never see again. He takes another stone—and goes through the same process. I am glad I will never be through cutting and polishing my store stone. I must keep at it like my religion—or I won't have a precious stone. God is good who doesn't ask me to put it aside, finished.

Others did clear away the chips and the fallen trees, and the work of making the road fell largely on other shoulders, but it was always under John Wanamaker's close supervision. He wanted it that way. His pioneering exploits would not have been written into the history of retail merchandising had it not been that way. He expressed the reason for the necessity of the leader's, the

organizer's, constant attention to the details of his business in colorful language:

This imperfect old world is made up of imperfect beings. The store is like a mechanical instrument, and gets out of tune except as its keys are touched by skillful and soulful fingers.

On another occasion he put the thought into one pregnant sentence:

The foot of the farmer is the best fertilizer for the field.

On March 24, 1916, Wanamaker's diary records:

I had the Chief Buyers—127 in all—to luncheon in the gray salon, 8th floor, on Monday from 1 to 2:45, and on Tuesday from 12 to 1:45, the Asst. Buyers—157 in all.

While in theory the buyers were each "as entirely independent in his own department as an individual owning a single store," thus carrying out the second point of the Wanamaker idea of business, "to maintain the individuality of each section as much as if it were in a separate building," all the other points of Wanamaker's conception of retail merchandising demanded direct and constant contact with the head of the business. At the end of each day, in both Philadelphia and New York, the department heads brought their sales reports to the private office, where they were handed to the merchant at his desk. When more than brief comment was needed, an appointment was given for the following day. Typical of Wanamaker's talks to the assembled buyers is the following, taken at random from the stenographic record of buyers' meetings:

It is a time when a man ought to look over the year behind him and see where he has been wrong in his judgment in gathering his stock and in managing.

For myself, I am very tired of wrestling with overstocks and it seems to me so childish to be loading up stuff that eats capital in interest and loses its bloom and value, and requires scientific surgery to cure.

I believe that the next six weeks are going to be hard on jobbers and commission houses and concerns that have to carry stocks, and that this will be a time of opportunity to make money.

It seems to me a piece of great folly to be carrying not only stocks of merchandise difficult to make a profit on, but stocks of assistants that for some reason or other have lost their bloom and that have proved themselves unequal to the work committed to them to do.

We want a clearance of stocks of merchandise and we want a clearance of inefficient helpers. This does not mean an earthquake, but it means a deep plowing of all the soil to get ready to plant for a better harvest.

The deep-sea fishing for the most valuable catch is for proper merchandise.

The rug advertisement of this week was as fine as we could have, but it sold no goods, and my conviction is, that since the people were here, and since the advertisement is read for other things, it must be read also for rugs and that something must have been the matter with the rugs that people didn't want them.

Wanamaker never tired of impressing on those who were responsible for the merchandise that they must be pioneers with him, alert for new ideas and daring to express them in the goods they offered. He told them that the chief element of success in retailing was not in advertising but

in getting what the people want, and keeping your eyes on the parts of the world where new things are made, and in giving customers the best and newest things along the lines of their real and fancied needs. Our aim is to get goods. Our advertisement is merely to tell the people that we have them. I like an advertisement which merely describes what we have in the store.

Wanamaker took a distinguished visitor to one of these conferences. When they returned to the private office, the visitor asked: "How do you do it? You covered so many things, and your criticisms were all about to-day's conditions and to-morrow's problems. You must have wonderfully able scouts."

"Here are my scouts," answered Wanamaker, putting two fingers over his eyes, "and here are their able aids,"

pointing to his feet. "I do have people shopping in the other stores, of course, all the time, but I depend upon myself for my knowledge of my own stores. Do you suppose I sit at this desk all day long? No, I am out on the floor."

Being "out on the floor" was the habit formed in the first days of Oak Hall that John Wanamaker never felt that he could afford to give up. He not only knew his stocks and how they were being displayed, but also how they were being sold. He was there not to spy or scold, but to encourage and inspire. His people knew this. It was the secret of the *esprit de corps* that General Grant noticed in 1879, and that made the Wanamaker stores express the personality of their founder as long as he lived. There was nothing that gave him greater joy than being "on the floor." More than once he said that the most fruitful ideas that ever came to him—ideas of merchandise, selling methods, service, store planning and decoration, display of goods, advertising, expansion, and welfare of his people—were born of studying the stores in operation.

In 1911, the Jubilee Year, an entry in the diary, dated New York, September 26, illustrates his devotion to business after half a century of it and also the fun he had in it. He wrote:

Hot! The thermo in this office is in the 80's and feels like the 90's as the humidity is so great. I am stopping down here until 9 to-night to a private show Miss —— is making of her part of the "fashion end." Twenty and more of our Philadelphia chiefs are on the evening train and will be suppered here. I am perspiring all over and over, though the morning papers prophesied frost this week!

Later the same evening, in his rooms at the Hotel Plaza, he added:

"Such a wonderful opening of women's dresses! Our girls wore the gowns in simple fashion and they were much

praised. Some of our own shoes, furs, and jewels were worn. It was a great revelation to the men, especially of what one section had in it and with the possibilities in the way of educating the whole House as to what other sections were doing. Miss —— certainly scored high in the estimation of us all."

Of his daily rounds Wanamaker made notes, jotting down whatever his eyes caught which he felt needed attention or study. The private files contain sheafs of these notes, sometimes dictated, but generally in his own hand. They tell us why he remained all his life a mercantile pioneer. If John Wanamaker had left nothing but these notes, we could still assert that documentary evidence throws full light upon the secret of his success as a merchant. We might divide his observations into six categories: on store planning; on display; on supply and demand; on quality; on taste; and on personnel.

The new building in New York was completed in 1907 and the new building in Philadelphia in 1911, when Wanamaker had been in business for himself just half a century. During all that time there had been constant alteration and expansion. Problems of store planning were, therefore, always in his mind. Wanamaker once told a friend that he could not remember a single month in half a century in which he did not have to decide upon some shift or change affecting the physical aspect of his stores. "When I was a youngster," he said, "we were continually enlarging our premises at Sixth and Market Streets. And then I kept on the go between there and the lower Chestnut Street store. The Grand Depot never did stop growing, and on this spot the most strenuous time was the ten years that the new store was building. And in New York we were always changing things about—we still are!" In all this evolution, which went on without ever interrupting the daily

business,<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker's subordinates brought suggestions to him and at times had to make important decisions themselves. But the eye of the chief was on the work, and his yes or no, his commendation or condemnation, was based upon knowledge of what was needed as well as of what was going on. Into the new buildings he put the experience of forty years of being "on the floor," and he tried out the new Philadelphia store building in sections, never hesitating to change plans in the light of experience.

To get most out of the display of goods was a life-long study with Wanamaker. Many of his ideas which seemed like intuitive flashes of genius were really the fruition of what had long been stored up in his mind while he was "on the floor." Problems of display fascinated him. And he was never satisfied with any solution. He used to keep modifying displays and introducing new features up to the very moment the store opened. He was on the lookout for errors of judgment, not to chide, but to help educate his people. Over and over again he would tell them that blunders were largely due to not thinking. For example, one day he got out of the elevator on the rug floor, where he had his private office, and noticed what seemed to him to be a rather ordinary rug hung from a pillar opposite the elevator exit. He went up to inspect, and found this rug marked at a low price, which did not seem to him very cheap at that. On the other side of the pillar was a Persian runner that was "a beauty," as he expressed it. It was expensive, but attractively priced. Calling the man responsible for display, he pointed out to him that where a thousand people would see it he had hung a rug of no drawing

<sup>1</sup> Walking one day on Chestnut Street with a friend, from whom the biographer has this story, Wanamaker paused before a store in whose front window was a large sign, "Closed for alterations until—" "That firm ought to get out of the merchandising business," he remarked. "A store that's alive can no more close for a month than you or I could stop living and then expect to start again."

power at all, and that he had put a splendid rug that anyone would want to look at where it would not be seen by one-tenth of the people that had to see the other rug. "Don't tell me you just didn't think," remarked Wanamaker. "The position of the rug says that."

Studying supply and demand is the merchant's greatest, as well as his most difficult, task, Wanamaker frequently declared. Overstocking meant losses that could easily wipe out the profits of a good season or carrying over goods that were not fresh. Understocking was harmful to the reputation of the store. Through years, in talks with buyers, ran the constant refrain: "Don't ever allow your salespeople to have to say, 'We'll have it in a few days,' or, 'We can order it for you.' The business of a merchant is to have the goods." The probability of the demand had to be considered. One effective way of doing it was to watch customers, note what they asked for, and be on the alert day after day for decreasing or increasing demands. Because he has so many departments whose experience can help other departments, the large general merchant enjoys an advantage over the merchant carrying one line of goods—if he appreciates this fact and knows how to make the departments help one another. Wanamaker was the first to develop an elaborate system of reporting, by which the heads of the different departments had the benefit of tendencies observed in other departments; and other general stores were studied as well.

If we were writing the history of the business instead of the life of the man, we should be tempted to point out that the story of an establishment like Wanamaker's was a history of changing styles. Departments of prime importance and large sales, such as veiling, corsets, gloves, and fancy underwear, no longer hold the place they used to occupy. In readjusting the space and sales force for depart-

ments like these (they are given only as illustrations—there are many others) the merchant has had to look ahead and study the habits of the people. Men are as changeable as women. How many there are to-day who never wear heavy garments at any period of the year! Houses, office buildings, and public conveyances are much better heated than they used to be. The demand gradually lessened for heavy woolen suits and overcoats—what they used to call “winter weight.” As for underclothing, the days of camel’s hair and Dr. Jaeger are past for men under fifty, most of whom wear summer weight the year round. In the first decade of automobiles, everybody dressed for motoring in special clothing as different from their ordinary clothes as if they were going bicycling. It is not only in women’s gowns and hats that fashions change radically and suddenly.

In his walks about the store Wanamaker had an eagle eye for merchandise that he thought was not up to his standard. He had the habit of appearing anywhere at any time, and he did not hesitate to look at merchandise when customers were around. If there was a line that he questioned, he had an article sent up to his office. When complaints came in that had to do with the quality of the goods sold, he would make a personal investigation. During the first thirty years he was in business Wanamaker had a constant fight with manufacturers to get goods that were “all wool and a yard wide.” It was possible to find ready-made clothing that satisfied him from the samples. But not only did he have to be on his guard to see that all the goods were up to specification, but bitter experience taught him that manufacturers, when they got a line established, would fail to maintain the quality that gave them their reputation. The retailer, standing between the manufacturer and the public, and guaranteeing the goods he sold, bore the blame when there was any falling off in the standard makes.

Wanamaker faced this same condition in aggravated form after becoming a general storekeeper. He maintained a laboratory and had tests made, because he believed that it was the retailer's business to know that the goods he sold were "right."

In 1891 he wrote:

The trouble with business of the U. S. (but it is fast improving) has been that we all wanted to get rich so fast that when we struck something the people wanted, instead of keeping the standard up, we sought to make it cheaper by using inferior material and less labor. What has made the English rich has been keeping up the standard.

But as our country settles down to a fixed destiny, and ceases to wander and speculate so much, we also are learning that business houses must be prolonged by their good repute, so that the trade mark shall be their best advertisement.

New England has already learned the necessity of thoroughness. The disabilities in the way of being distant from fuel and metals are turning out to the advantage of those thus handicapped, demanding of them in competition to offer a higher standard in their productions; and Pennsylvania must fall into the same track.

When Wanamaker started a restaurant, it was not long before the quality of the food attracted people in greater numbers than could be handled. Old Major Washburn, of the exclusive Philadelphia Club, wondered why the club chef could not make croquettes like Wanamaker's, and he decided to get the Wanamaker recipe. He asked for it point blank, and was given it without hesitation. Still the croquettes were not the same. Upon making further inquiries he was referred directly to the Wanamaker chef, who said that the secret of the croquettes was simple—he used only the best veal.

Worship, of course, is not the word to use in describing Wanamaker's attitude toward beautiful things; but it was pretty nearly worship. There was something of the Victorian in him, as in all of his generation; but he outgrew the

taste of the nineteenth century more quickly than his contemporaries. It is not too much to say that back in the 1880's and the 1890's one of the great struggles of his life was to make the hodge-podge of a building that evolved from the Grand Depot represent himself. In this herculean task he succeeded fairly well. The old Wanamaker's, on the inside, kept well ahead of the times in the store furnishings. The elegant simplicity of the new Wanamaker's is simply the fulfillment of its builder's dream—a dream that had already been partly realized in the face of handicaps that a less indomitable spirit would have come to believe were insuperable.

Wanamaker said that his stores would betray a public trust if they offered for sale any merchandise that was not in good taste. Not long after he had opened his furniture department, he called the head one day and declared that the furniture in the store was a disgrace. "I wouldn't have it in my house," he said, "and I won't have anything in my store that I wouldn't be willing to buy and use myself." He issued an ultimatum: either John Wanamaker was to carry only the very best of furniture or John Wanamaker would go out of the furniture business. The furniture head answered that the things Wanamaker objected to people wanted, as was proven by the fact that they bought them. "Well, they oughtn't to want them!" exclaimed Wanamaker. "If we can't get them to want better stuff than that, I am willing to close up this department." "Would you have me buy antiques?" asked the head, venturing what he thought was a joke. "Yes," said Wanamaker, "buy antiques. Buy lines of the best furniture you can get your hands on. Through the antiques, people may get interested in the good reproductions." These words marked a new era in the furniture industry

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in the United States, and in the spirit and methods of selling furniture in general stores.

We could give many other examples of how Wanamaker's innate good taste and his determination that the stores should carry nothing that was cheap and vulgar kept him from yielding to the temptation of developing his unique establishments into department stores.<sup>1</sup> After the period of rapid expansion from 1877 to 1883, no new line was added until Wanamaker was sure that he was going to be able to put the new department on a footing where it could compete in quality and taste with the best specialty shops. His correspondence bears eloquent witness to this fact. With his start in the field and the selling potentialities of his vast establishments he could have made money in any new venture. But his business was no money-making mechanism, with volumes of sales as the goal. It was his life. It was himself. And when he added a new department, it was always as a pioneer and originator, revolutionizing old methods and setting new standards.

A volume could be written about Wanamaker and the piano business, into which he entered as late as 1899. He had been thinking of pianos for fifteen years. The piano trade was in a chaotic condition. When, finally, he decided to sell pianos, instruments of standard makes, within the reach of all, were for the first time sold at a fixed price, like other merchandise. To accomplish this reform Wana-

<sup>1</sup> "I do not deal in bankrupt stuff or stuff hard to sell," declared Wanamaker to S. S. McClure in an interview in 1912. The private files bear eloquent testimony to the truth of this statement. Wanamaker consistently turned down "bargain stocks" offered to him, except in rare instances when they happened to fit into what he had planned to offer to the public and were at the same time of Wanamaker quality. To his buyers he said over and over again that they should not be influenced by reduced prices, but should buy only what they felt the people wanted and "pay fair prices." He said that the guiding principle of the Wanamaker stores was to "find out what the people want and have it for them, instead of helping manufacturers, wholesalers, and unsuccessful retailers to unload their goods."

maker had to buy control of manufacturing companies and go into the business of making pianos. Undertaken in the public interest, and against the advice of some of his associates, the piano departments, which soon stocked all kinds of musical instruments, became and have remained an outstanding success of the Wanamaker stores.<sup>1</sup>

It was no parvenu who inherited the Stewart building in 1896. Wanamaker was both worthy of the setting and ready for it. How he displayed his goods as well as the goods he displayed became the talk of New York during the very first season. A man who did not know or care much about business history, and to whom the forty-five years of John Wanamaker's experience in mercantile pioneering counted for nothing, wrote in 1897, before the New York store was a year old, that Wanamaker was giving New York merchants an example of perfect taste in display and in merchandise. He was astonished at a fact that would have had nothing of surprise in it, had he known the man and his preparation for New York.

The last category of observation in the daily floor rounds was paying attention to the human element. In 1908, there is a diary record of November 27:

I go all day from place to place screwing everything up for the

<sup>1</sup> At the National Convention of Piano Dealers in 1900, when they were discussing the probability of department stores following the example of John Wanamaker, one of the delegates stated on the platform: "If the department stores do start selling pianos, the dealers will have only themselves to blame. Ever since I have been in business, I have noticed that the dealers have not adhered to the one-price system and have had no fixed values for their pianos. The lack of confidence between dealers and customers is at the bottom of the department-store movement." And after three years of the Wanamaker innovation, the *Musical Courier Extra*, July 26, 1902, said: "Through his enormous power in the industrial world Mr. Wanamaker has opened a path to correct the evils of the disorganized piano industry, with the absence of mercantile law in the conduct of its affairs." After nine years in the business, Wanamaker advertised: "No other retail piano store in the world ever before carried the stock that we carry; and we might add that in all probability no other ever will." There were at that time over one thousand instruments in both stores.

Christmas month and giving lessons to one after another as I meet them on my way.

To-day a man falls down or is tempted to leave, and I must go out with a life line and rescue him, and the same thing goes on to-morrow with some other weak brother. Without watch and care our organization would break in some places every day.

And on December 15 of the same year:

I am debating questions of organization all the time, putting in new timber, making new bolts, screwing up loose joints, and rebuilding the old worn-out fences all around.

Later, in writing of the store family and of adventures in mercantile education, the pioneering achievements of John Wanamaker in his relations with his personnel will be told.<sup>1</sup> But there is place here for one illustration of the kind of watchfulness that gave, and retained for, the Wanamaker establishments the reputation for service. One day, in the course of his rounds, Wanamaker noticed that a woman was standing in front of a counter vainly endeavoring to attract the attention of two saleswomen who were chatting with the wrapping clerk. The man whom his fellow-citizens regarded as the most eminent Philadelphian (this incident occurred in the later years) stepped behind the counter and asked what was wanted. He had begun to bring out boxes when the girls suddenly realized what was happening. When they rushed up, he yielded his place to them with a smile. He said nothing. He did not have to.

Nowhere in his papers is there evidence that Wanamaker worried about prices. He wanted everything in his establishments to be marked fairly, and his attitude during the World War and afterward is indicative of how he felt about profiteering. But he did not pretend to sell goods by making the price the attraction. This was the stand he

<sup>1</sup> See below, chaps. xix and xx.

took when he was twenty-four years old, in the second year of the Civil War, and he adhered to it rigidly throughout his mercantile career. He built up his reputation on the quality of his goods and invited the public to buy from him on the basis of "fair prices for the value." Marked-down goods and sales always carried the announcement that what he had to offer were "Wanamaker quality." It was always possible for other merchants to undersell John Wanamaker with bargain lots and with stocks "on commission" that were not guaranteed. Once when he was taxed by a new buyer, who had come to Wanamaker's under a misapprehension, with not being "a good merchant," Wanamaker gently corrected him. "You mean a good horse dealer," he said.

The great success of the experiment of "invading New York," as trade journals of the day called it, led to the belief that John Wanamaker contemplated further expansion of his business. In May, 1899, a visit to Chicago, where he spent a day in the examination of one of the large department stores, led to the rumor that he was going to launch a Wanamaker's in Chicago. The rumors persisted, and were frequently noticed in the Chicago press. They were revived in 1902, when Wanamaker went to Chicago to consult the architect Burnham. It was not known then that he had Burnham in mind to build the new Philadelphia store. In 1900 the Boston newspapers announced that Wanamaker had bought the old Music Hall property and other parcels of real estate in the block bounded by Washington, Bromfield, Tremont, and Winter Streets, for the purpose of opening a Boston Wanamaker's. In 1901 it was stated that Wanamaker had combined with Marshall Field of Chicago and Jordan Marsh & Co. of Boston to make "the greatest colossal mercantile combination which the world has ever seen." During the same year it was

confidently announced that Wanamaker had taken options on a large Euclid Avenue frontage in Cleveland. There is no confirmation of any of these rumors in Wanamaker's correspondence or diaries. Proposals were made to him from time to time by interested real-estate brokers to enter the general-store field in other cities, but none of them was seriously entertained.

He refused persistent offers to enter the mail-order business, notably in St. Louis. These rumors are worth recording, however, for they indicate the impression that was made on the mercantile world by Wanamaker's ability to do in New York, where every condition seemed unfavorable, what he had accomplished in Philadelphia.

There is no doubt, on the other hand, that between 1899 and 1906 Wanamaker seriously entertained the idea of establishing in Europe an American store of the kind he had been instrumental in developing in the United States. In 1899 he formulated a plan for organizing a limited company in London, and for six or seven years he had the fun of considering sites in Oxford Street, at Trafalgar Square, on High Holborn, and on the new Kingsway. It was a dream of his to establish a store in Paris.<sup>1</sup> On his sixty-eighth birthday, in 1906, the newspapers stated that John Wanamaker had perfected plans for an immense department store in Berlin. Although they had no facts that had been corroborated, they announced the details of the plan as follows:

He has bought a block for 40,000,000 marks, and will include in it astonishing amplitude a hotel, roof garden, concert hall, and a mammoth restaurant. The building will be eight stories high, constructed under the direction of a distinguished American architect, and two years will be required for its completion. The Berlin papers say it will be a world wonder.

<sup>1</sup> See extract from Wanamaker's diary, dated Paris, May 20, 1903, which is reproduced in chap. vi, below, p. 78.

There was so much to be accomplished in expanding the Stewart business and in completing the new buildings in New York and Philadelphia that Wanamaker did not pursue his European projects, which were never really concrete plans. Gordon Selfridge, of Marshall Field & Co., took up the idea of an American store in London. The Paris plans were abandoned after the death of Thomas B. Wanamaker, and the last entry concerning it in John Wanamaker's diary, August 9, 1909, gives as the reason:

We have so much on our hands in business in which we have experience that to take up anything that we know nothing about is quite impolitic.

From other allusions in the Wanamaker correspondence we are able to state that the principal reason for not going farther afield in mercantile pioneering than New York was the same that had prevented him from following out the idea of chain clothing stores in the early 1870's. The Wanamaker business—and all the pioneering that went with it—was a purely individual venture, built up by one man and dominated by his personality. It succeeded because he was able to give personal attention to it. He feared that if he went farther afield "the foot of the farmer" could not continue to be everywhere "the fertilizer for the field."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HABIT OF EUROPE

AFTER Wanamaker retired from the Postmaster-Generalship, the long trip through Mexico and the West in the spring of 1893 sufficed for the vacation of that year. It was not until 1894 that he resumed his visits to Europe after a lapse of seven years. This trip was the beginning of a period, which lasted for nearly twenty years, when much time was devoted to foreign travel. Wanamaker was getting what he called "the habit of Europe." And yet, with the exception of the first few years of the Grand Depot, the decades from 1894 to 1912 were those of his heaviest business burdens and of his most critical problems. It was a period, also, of intense activity, development, and changes at Bethany. Working ahead at high pressure and gradually going from middle age into what for most men is old age, Wanamaker found in ocean travel and in European watering places and cities the recreation and change that he needed. He seemed to come back from Europe every year bubbling over with energy and good spirits, and able to take up instantly the thread of a business deal or problem.

It was the fiftieth anniversary of the Y. M. C. A. that drew him to London at the end of May, 1894. He was on the platform with his old friend, George Williams,<sup>1</sup> at the Mansion House meeting, with the Lord Mayor presiding, and at Exeter Hall when John G. Paton, of the Fiji

<sup>1</sup> Queen Victoria recognized the Y. M. C. A. jubilee by knighting the veteran London merchant. Thereafter he was known as Sir George Williams.

Islands, told his memorable story. He was among the honored guests at the service in Westminster Abbey when the Bishop of London preached. In his private office hangs a photograph of the delegates to the Jubilee Convention, taken at Windsor Castle. Wanamaker considered this one of the memorable occasions of his life. He was presented to Queen Victoria, and was the spokesman of the American delegates in thanking the Queen for her hospitality. Wanamaker and Theodore L. Cuyler addressed the convention on Y. M. C. A. work in the United States, where its growth had been phenomenal. The Philadelphia merchant received a great ovation when Sir George Williams introduced him as the "first exponent of the profession of Y. M. C. A. secretary, to which our organization owes its international character and enormous influence."

Wanamaker stayed on in London for some weeks after the convention. He had discovered that his status in the English capital was different from what it had been before. Not much attention was paid to mere merchants, no matter how colossal their establishments. It was a different story when a member of the Cabinet in the last American administration was introduced. He now had a title to recognition in official and social circles. As Wanamaker's interest in postal matters was still strong, he enjoyed the opportunity of seeing the work of the British Post Office.

In a letter written to the Bethany Union from Carlsbad on July 9 he spoke of having come from London by way of Paris, and described delightfully his visit to Nuremberg. A great change had come over the man in the way he viewed things European and in the interest he manifested in every phase of European life. The tourist viewpoint and attitude were beginning to leave him.

This fact is more marked in the correspondence and journal of the summer of 1895. He was at Carlsbad again in

August with his wife and daughters, and he recorded his impressions of drives and tramps through the Austrian Alps. He could not stay at the Grand Hotel Pupp in an armchair, content to drink the waters and listen to the music. Even when supposed to be resting he had to be "up and doing." Day after day mountain resorts were visited. Sometimes, with guests whom he had invited to come to Carlsbad, he went far afield. And in everything he wrote we find a vivid appreciation of the beauties of mountain scenery. To Henry Clay Trumbull he said one day, in showing him a panorama that he had long loved: "Look at it, and then close your eyes. Now, with your eyes closed, let every detail of this wonderful picture be photographed in your memory."

The diary gives an intimate glimpse of a family coaching trip in France. On Tuesday, September 10, 1895, the Wanamaker coach left the Hôtel Liverpool, Paris. Rodman Wanamaker drove. His sister Lillie was on the box with him. John Wanamaker, on the next seat, had as his guests Mahomet Ali, brother to the "young Khedive of Egypt," and Baroness Ruxlaben. The coach was white, blue, and black, and was drawn by four grays and blacks. "To the tune of Howlett's horn, we wheeled around to the Champs Elysées, and a quarter of an hour later swept under the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe, a happy party." Through the Bois to Saint Cloud, where horses were changed, and then on to Versailles, with luncheon at the Reservoirs. In the afternoon they went by way of Marly and the forest of Saint-Germain to Mantes, where the night was passed at the Hôtel Grandart. "A royal dinner was served at 8:45. Paris could not have surpassed it."

On Wednesday there was "breakfast in a French garden. Luncheon at the relay station at Eure." Toward dusk the cathedral of Evreux "loomed in sight." At the Hôtel

de la Biche, "we faced canteloupe, roast chicken, and fine venison at the table, with the bells of Normandy chiming while we ate."

The next day there was luncheon "at the tiniest hostelry, the Hôtel du Solice d'Or on the river at Thibaultville. Two-hour rest for the horses, and at 3:30 we started off, taking up the baroness two miles ahead, where she had gone blackberrying. We halted for the night at the Hôtel Louis d'Or, Pont l'Evêque, the oldest, queerest, quaintest inn of all we have seen."

On Friday morning on the road "we picked up Mrs. R. W. and John, Jr. and Nini, who drove from Cabourg to meet us." There was luncheon at Trouville, and then the afternoon drive through Deauville, Villers, Houlgate, and Dives, to Cabourg "to stay over Sunday at the Grand Hôtel." On Saturday, the coach was taken out for a drive to lunch at Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer, where John Wanamaker reported: "As I write this in soft sunny light, by the edge of the sea, with the sound of the surf breaking on the smooth beach at my feet, luncheon is calling." And later "it proved to be a merry one." Followed a graphic description of the abbey churches of William and Matilda at Caen, the old houses, and the river running through a forest.

With the exception of the later voyage to India, the longest tour Wanamaker ever made was between January and June of 1896, just before the entry into the McKinley-Bryan campaign and to New York business life. His wife and sons urged him to visit the Holy Land, knowing what this would mean to him in his Sunday-school work. He had always wanted to go, but had never felt that he could be away long enough for the journey. At that time the Mediterranean trips, where the whole voyage was made on a steamer under charter to a tourist agency, was just coming

into vogue. People who knew no foreign languages, who had limited time, and who did not want to overtax their physical strength, were beginning to find the dreams of years realizable through this new form of travel. We have learned from companions on the Mediterranean trip that the marked characteristics of Wanamaker's sight-seeing were his energy, his ability to take everything in rapidly and not forget it, and his irrepressible sense of humor. "He was gay all the time," we are told, "and he never missed the opportunity of having his little joke with the literal-minded. The captain was a very serious person, and Mr. Wanamaker loved to tease him. When skirting the coast of Greece, coming up on deck early one morning, Mr. Wanamaker ran into the captain. Pointing to the mountains that were reaching to the clouds, Mr. Wanamaker asked, 'Captain, what is that?' He replied, 'Snow.' Mr. Wanamaker exclaimed, 'Why, my steward told me it was Greece! What am I to believe?'"

But in the Holy Land he was sober and reverent, and his detailed knowledge of topography and legends, as well as his ability to outquote any preacher on board in biblical allusions, were noted by everybody. To one of his intimate friends he said that when he had visited the Holy Sepulcher, he waited until no one was around but an old woman in charge. Then he slipped some money into the woman's hand, and, "yielding to an irresistible temptation, I stretched myself out on the tomb."

The trip included glimpses of North Africa and Turkey, and a voyage up the Nile. Wanamaker said that he never got over the desire to go back to Cairo, and just stay there. Why he had this desire he could not explain. He loved Beirut, also, and frequently alluded to the two ranges of mountains rising behind the town. The mission work of

his own church he saw at Beirut—his first personal contact with Presbyterian foreign missionaries on the field. In his wife's name and in his own he gave a contribution to the work among children, and he promised to return to Beirut.

In a Sunday-school talk on the Mars Hill speech of St. Paul, after his return, he described the Acropolis as he felt it when he sailed into the Piræus, and when he was up there, visiting the ruins. His picture of the ride up the hill, of the Acropolis and its temples, and of the site of the Areopagus will be recognized as faithful and accurate by everyone who has been there. He had some notes, of course; but we are frequently struck with the photographic quality of his memory, which, however, did not prevent him from feeling things as well as seeing them.

Wanamaker left the cruise at Naples, and after stopping at Rome and Florence, went to Carlsbad for his cure. But he did not stay long, despite the urging of his sons. He was eager to get into the political fray and to begin the negotiations that ended in taking over the business of Hilton, Hughes & Co. in New York. When he returned he said at Bethany: "While away I visited fifteen of the nations of the Old World. It is far from easy to tell you how pleased I am to end my twentieth voyage across the Atlantic." Although nearly sixty years old, he still persisted in declaring, as he had done a decade before, that his big work and his best work were still in the future. Pleased as he was to come home, the half-year of travel had done much to make possible bearing the strain of the months ahead.

As we have seen, the next three years were those of the colorful episode of Wanamaker's effort to break the Pennsylvania Republican machine. Coupled with the business venture in New York, his political activities precluded any

long absence from home. It was not until 1899, therefore, that Wanamaker had the opportunity for another long sojourn abroad. In 1898 he had contented himself with a fortnight in London, and returned by way of Liverpool, where he spoke at the World's Christian Endeavor Convention.<sup>1</sup> He allowed the ocean voyage to take the place of his Carlsbad cure. But in 1899 he went on one of the first North German Lloyd's Midnight Sun cruises. To the Bethany Bible Union he wrote from Paris on June 25:

Our ship slowed up off the port of Cherbourg Thursday night at five minutes to ten, and a little tender came off out into the stream, and took off one hundred and twenty-five passengers and their trunks. A special train was waiting, as there were not enough hotel accommodations for so many in the little seaport town, and it was twelve o'clock before the little bell tinkled and trumpet blew that started us for Paris—all night we had to sit up in the cars, but as daylight came at three o'clock it was interesting to see the French peasants at work in the fields, and the little villages wake up to Friday morning.

We rolled into Paris at ten minutes after eight o'clock, two hours and three quarters after time, very tired, very hungry and very glad to be again on steady ground. It is strange, though, that for hours after you come ashore after a voyage, you feel the motion of the vessel and swing about as if you were yet on the whirling, rolling, swinging sea.

Our coming here is to fill in the time while the steamer *Auguste Victoria* is at Hamburg unloading cargo, coaling, and provisioning for the Norway trip. I leave here for Hamburg on Thursday, the 29th of June, at noon, and to avoid night travel I stop over all night Thursday at Cologne, where the next morning I go to the great Cathedral and say prayers for myself and those I love and then at 8:29 go on by rail to Berlin, to stay all night and part of the next day, leaving Saturday about noon for Hamburg, to take the ship for nearly a month upon the North Sea.

A Bethany publication gives us another interesting letter, written in the midst of the trip:

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Francis E. Clark, founder of the C. E. movement, always visited the Wanamakers when he came to Philadelphia. Mrs. Wanamaker regarded him as one of the greatest and most useful of religious leaders, and kept in close touch with him until her death. See below, p. 350.

But the chief thing of which I must write is the midnight sun. We saw the sun set at twelve o'clock midnight Saturday and in a few minutes rise and begin another day.

There has been no darkness except about two hours on Thursday night, when it was for those two hours like twilight and any one could read without a candle.

It is an awe-inspiring sight to see the sun acting so strangely. To go to bed in broad daylight when your watch says it is past midnight is very odd.

The sky is full of beautiful colors—last night to me the color predominating was purple. Great plumes of blue and purple shot up from the crown of the sun.

At the eventful moment when the sun was riding up anew into the sky the band saluted it and the passengers of the ship formed in line two by two and marched around the ship after the band.

I believe I thought of all my friends and wished for them to enjoy this wonderful sight. We are on the sea for the next two weeks, our next stopping-place after the North Cape being Spitzbergen, the point from which expeditions start for the North Pole. It is a wilderness of stupendous glaciers, and mysterious ice-caves. The ice fox and reindeer inhabit the cliffs and islands. Numerous walruses tumble about in the water with sea birds and eider ducks and seals.

I am pleased to say we are all well and I can walk five miles a day.

Very faithfully,

JOHN THANKFUL.<sup>1</sup>

On the Fourth of July, at Odde, Norway, his fellow-cruisers chose him to give the American oration of the day. The German orator was Count Metternich. A week later they signed birthday resolutions "near Spitzbergen, July 11, 1899." But the most memorable event of the trip was the interview with Kaiser Wilhelm. As the *Auguste Victoria* was off the coast of Norway, the imperial yacht was seen. The yacht signaled that the Kaiser would come on board. When he made his visit he said that he wanted

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker used to love signing his letters by fanciful names, reflecting his mood of the moment. He once liked a book called *John Ploughman*—and this was his name to friends at the bottom of letters for a long time.

to meet the most prominent American aboard. Captain Kaempff sent for John Wanamaker. Wilhelm II received the American merchant in the captain's cabin and talked on business affairs for nearly an hour. Wanamaker afterward remarked upon the shrewdness of the Kaiser's questions. He seemed more the business man than the sovereign. When Wanamaker asked him whether he purposed visiting America, he answered, "The possibility is not entirely excluded. If a boat is being built which covers forty miles an hour, my coming is sure. At present it would be rather difficult for me to be out of touch with Germany from five to six days."<sup>1</sup>

When he left, the Kaiser told Wanamaker that he and his fellow-passengers were welcome to visit the *Hohenzollern*. Later, after advantage had been taken of this invitation, a telegram was sent to the Kaiser:

The delightful visit of Y. I. M., July 19, 1899, on board the *Auguste Victoria*, and the gracious permission to inspect Y. I. M.'s yacht *Hohenzollern* has made this day never to be forgotten. The undersigned begs therefore Y. I. M. in the name of the passengers, to tender you their sincerest thanks.

JOHN WANAMAKER

<sup>1</sup> This account is taken not from Wanamaker's recollections, but from the *Taegliche Zeitung*, Hamburg, August 18, 1899. It must be remembered that wireless telegraphy and radio were not thought of at that time. When he returned to New York, Wanamaker told the reporters at Quarantine, "To make the freedom of conversation of one gentleman with another the subject of an interview for newspaper publication does not seem to me to be proper. But I can say that I was greatly impressed with the wide scope of the Kaiser's thinking and of his great desire to inform himself on what American citizens were developing. I believe the Emperor to be broad-minded. He has not the narrowness that ill-informed persons sometimes attribute to him. To me he seemed to be filled with a high purpose, not only to be a ruler, but to advance the welfare and happiness of his people. Very sure I am that his pride in the traditions and present glory of the German Empire will not cloud his appreciation of our country which is in no inconsiderable part German-American. There can be no question of doubt that it will be no fault of the young and vigorous Kaiser if the relations between America and Germany do not have the closest and most cordial character."

The Kaiser answered:

HERRN JOHN WANAMAKER

DAMPFER AUGUSTE VICTORIA,

GUDVANGEN.

Es ist mir eine Freude gewesen, den Passagieren der *Auguste Victoria* die Besichtigung der *Hohenzollern* gewähren zu koennen; bitte denselben meinen Dank für das freundliche telegramm auszusprechen. Ich wünsche der *Auguste Victoria* glückliche Fahrt und Heimkehr.

WILHELM

I. R.<sup>1</sup>

There were other countries visited in the various trips during the years following the resumption of voyages to Europe, notably Switzerland. But virtually all the comments in Wanamaker's correspondence about Europe refer to England, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. His Austrian experiences seem to be limited to Carlsbad and the mountains of Bohemia. He probably visited Vienna, but we do not find him either in the Styrian Alps or in the Tyrol. He preferred the smaller German cities to Munich, and London and Paris to Berlin. Only for a few years did he have any admiration for German taste—and that was a passing phase, which affected Americans generally at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is evident that he did not love high mountains, with snow and glaciers, nearly as much as lower ranges, where he could see valleys and human habitations. We find little comment in his letters on lonely places. Nature, animate and inanimate, was at her best with him when there was the accompaniment of some human life or activity, or when it affected some other sense than that of sight. He loved to hear the birds and smell the flowers.

After the final destruction of his hopes of becoming a

<sup>1</sup> The original of the telegram is in the safe in Wanamaker's private office.

Republican party leader in Pennsylvania or of going to the Senate, Wanamaker felt the need of rest for a year or two, and confined his European trips mostly to Carlsbad, after brief stops in London or Paris or both cities. This was greatly to the delight of Mrs. Wanamaker, who was unable to stand traveling in her husband's ruthlessly tireless way. They were frequently at the Grand Hotel Pupp, and there they met people of all nations, with the inevitable result of broader social contacts and a broader view of all that went to make up the world in which they lived.

## CHAPTER V

### TO INDIA AND BACK

IN the autumn of 1901, yielding to the urging of his family, who felt that he was wearing himself out with his many incessant activities, Wanamaker went to Europe for the winter. He had no definite object in view, except the determination to revisit Egypt. Of this his physicians approved. They told him that he should not go to London and Paris in the winter, and they knew that he would be a fish out of water on the Riviera. After the first spell of the beauty wore off, Wanamaker would have seen nothing to commend and everything to condemn at Nice and Monte Carlo. In December we find him at Bertolini's Palace Hotel at Naples, taking passage for the East on the Hamburg-America liner *Hamburg*. Instead of stopping at Egypt for any length of time, he re-embarked on the North German Lloyd *Grosser Kurfürst*, and spent Christmas in the Suez Canal. A longer stretch than he had ever had in his life of a sea voyage without friends put him in a meditative frame of mind. On a small sheet of paper in his own handwriting, the biographer discovered in his desk a prayer that he had preserved for twenty years. It was written "at Midnight, 31 Dec. 1901, approaching Colombo, Ceylon." In it the traveler said: "I give myself to please and obey Thee, asking that Thou wilt deign to be my guide at every step of my life." It ended with the plea: "Oh, Lord, help and hold me on the Indian Ocean near India!"

He had evidently been reading up, as was his custom, on

January first 1902 Indian Ocean

I resolve to determine to -

1. Systematize my time arranging each morning the day before leaving my bed room - & putting the program in writing
2. Read all letters then rec'd & answer all that come before 3 P.M. the day rec'd - & all others next day.
3. Until I return to America to give 2 hours each day to concentrate thought upon the business of India & N. Y.
4. Not waste time on unnecessary matters.
5. Seek & strive to do each day some definitely important thing.
6. Try to be more to each member of my immediate family
7. Make a list of all my known relatives in a book to ascertain any duty undone
8. If use a book with each work stated that I am interested in to study if I am fulfilling my duty - To read this at least once a week
9. I will spend more time in private prayer

the things he hoped to see, and undoubtedly, from the list of books he took, he was much more interested in missionary problems in India than in the politics and history of Great Britain's greatest possession.

In another place we discovered his New Year resolutions, on a small piece of paper, with ruled lines, evidently torn out of a notebook. They read:

January first, 1902 *Indian Ocean*

I resolve and determine to:

1. Systematize my time, arranging each morning the day before leaving my bedroom, and putting the program in writing.
2. Read all letters when received and answer all that come before 3 p.m. the day received, and all others next day.
3. Until I return to America, to give two hours each day to concentrated thought upon the business, Philadelphia and New York.
4. Not waste time on unnecessary matters.
5. Seek and strive to do each day some definitely important thing.
6. Try to be more to each member of my immediate family.
7. Make a list of all my known relatives in a book to ascertain any duty undone.
8. Have a book with each work stated, that I am interested in to study, if I am fulfilling my duty. To read this book at least once a week.
9. I will spend more time in private prayer.

The next day he was at Colombo, and immediately took the three-day trip to Kandy. On January 5 he left Colombo on the *City of Oxford*, arriving in Calcutta six days later. Ten days in Calcutta were broken by a trip to Darjeeling for a glimpse of the Himalayas. At Calcutta he was the recipient of much attention from officials and missionaries. Lieutenant-Governor and Lady Woodburn invited him to a ball. Lord and Lady Curzon gave a dinner for him at Government House, and he attended the "Viceroy's Evening Party." The Curzons urged him to spend several months in India, and went out of their way to offer him every facility for travel. Lady Curzon,

daughter of a partner in Marshall Field & Co., had been a débutante in Washington when he was Postmaster-General, so he had doubly high standing with the Viceroy and his wife.

But John Wanamaker had gone to India with the intention of seeing missionaries. After his return to Paris he described his India trip as "a beautiful visit to the missions and the missionaries." And said that he was "returning with a heart full of sympathy with the servants of God who are laboring with the patience of Christ in the land of the heathen."<sup>1</sup> He was glad to get his passports in order with the help of officials in high places, but he chose deliberately to shape his plans and spend his time with missionaries of the Presbyterian Board and Y. M. C. A. secretaries, who represented his two great interests in the country.

So he left Calcutta on January 22, gave Benares just a peep, and spent two days at Allahabad, a center of Presbyterian evangelical and educational work. Dr. Ewing, president of the American college there, told him that he ought to give a week to Agra and Delhi. He compromised on four days, taking in Cawnpore and Lucknow on the way. He was in Bombay at the end of January for several days, then at Madras for two days, and went south, stopping at Presbyterian mission stations *en route*. He reached Ceylon again on February 7.

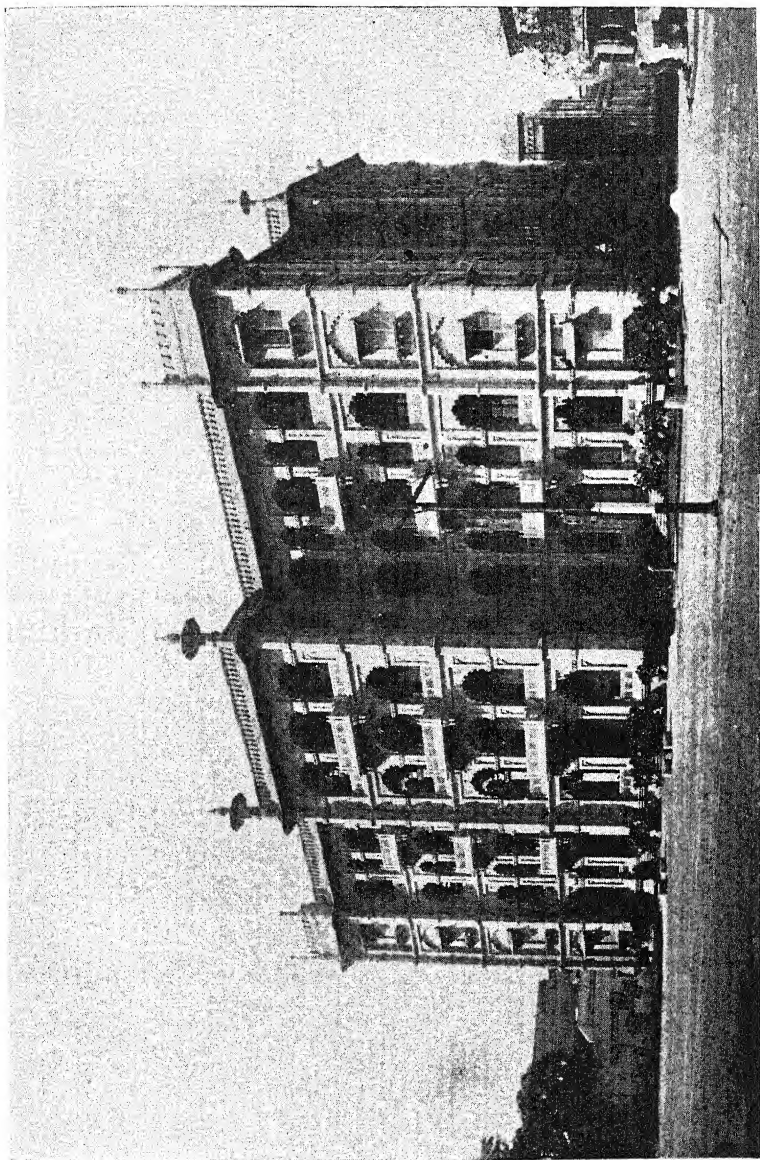
Wanamaker was besieged with an astonishing variety of begging letters and invitations from missionaries, British civilians, Eurasians, and native Christians. They began to pour in at the Continental Hotel, Calcutta, on the day of his arrival. He was unable even to answer the telegrams, so numerous were they. His reputation for fabulous wealth had evidently preceded him. Coupled with his avowed

<sup>1</sup> Letter to L. P. Rowland of Grand Rapids, Mich., written on March 17, 1902.

intention of spending his time in India in an investigation of missionary work, this supposed command of unlimited resources raised wild hopes in many a breast. To more than one insistent claimant he had to admit frankly that if he followed his heart's desire in endowing schools and erecting buildings he could have spent several times his fortune during the month in India. But he was accessible and genial, and in the smaller places he visited, when there was time, he inspected the work of all denominations and nations.

Outside of the Presbyterian missions, of which he planned to make a report to present to the 1902 General Assembly, we find that he was especially interested in the Baptist Famine Orphanage at Agra and the Industrial Home for Poor Girls run by the Irish Presentation nuns at Vepery. To these and to others he made gifts or sent presents later. He took the voluminous correspondence back with him to Paris and devoted several days there to letters of acknowledgment and thanks.

Among the most important of these letters were those to Dr. Ewing of Allahabad and Dr. Ewing of Lahore, inclosing drafts and asking for the plans of their schools. He promised to confer with Mr. Speer in New York about sending out teachers to the Allahabad college. The letter to Dr. A. H. Ewing pledged a definite sum for the yearly salary of two new teachers, and concluded: "I will try to keep you in funds, but you can always count upon this sum coming, and go on and take care of the people and make them happy." The days at Allahabad were the beginning of an interest that never died. In addition to supporting teachers, he built a laboratory and hostel and two bungalows. After he had talked the situation over with Mrs. Wanamaker he erected the Mary Wanamaker High School for Girls—one of the new group of buildings of the Alla-



MARY WANMAKER GIRLS' SCHOOL, ALLAHABAD, INDIA



habad Christian College, which was furnished by Bethany Sunday School and to the maintenance of which Bethany contributed for years.

At Calcutta he made a substantial gift to the work of the Sunday School Union and presented a communion service and a memorial tablet to the first missionaries in India.<sup>1</sup> There he heard John R. Mott address a great audience of Indian students and schoolboys. At the close of the meeting he asked Mott what he could do for India. Mott replied that the most important thing he could think of would be to provide a building for the high-school boys of Calcutta. A few days later, when Mott was on his way to Bombay to sail for America, he received a telegram from Wanamaker saying that he would gladly give the money for this building. The promise was confirmed in a letter from Paris on March 17, when Wanamaker wrote to the Calcutta secretary to authorize the local board to go forward with the work of the erection and furnishing of the boys' branch building, "with the express condition that under no possible circumstances any debt be incurred."

When he reached the Bombay Presidency, plague was raging. He had, in fact, met plague everywhere in India; and the hopeless condition of the people stirred him deeply. He wrote: "Health conditions are appalling. No words can express the brave and self-sacrificing work of the missionaries. But it is a drop in the bucket. In some large cities there are whole streets in every house of which I am told there is a case of the plague."

The next objective was Madras, in which he had a particular reason to be interested. Five years earlier, on the train from Philadelphia to New York, he had met a former

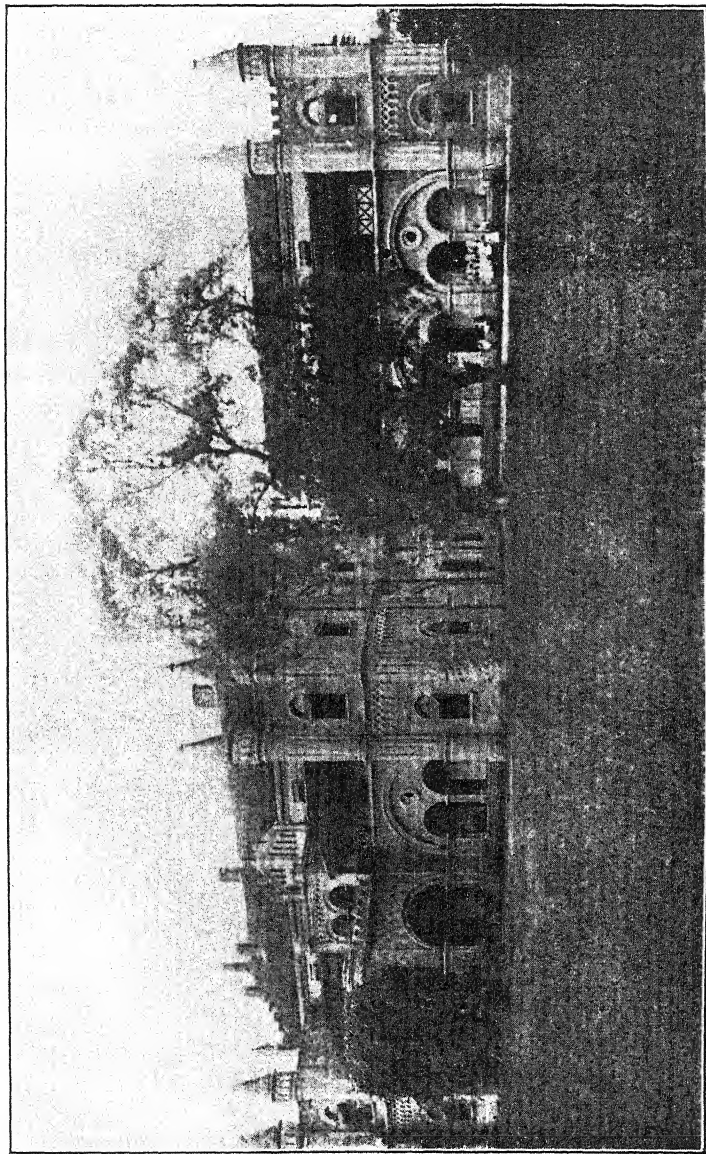
<sup>1</sup> The tablet to the memory of Adoniram Judson, "erected by one of his countrymen who revered his memory," is in the Lal Bazaar Chapel. Dr. Judson worked for thirty-eight years in Burma. He was the first missionary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, and began his work in 1812.

general secretary of the Philadelphia Y. M. C. A., who was then just starting in to work at Madras. Touched by his story, on the back of a card he wrote a pledge for \$30,000 to give the association a building in Madras. This had been completed and dedicated in January, 1900, with the Governor of Madras in the chair. After two years, the benefactor was happily present at the anniversary of this occasion, and made an address, Lord Ampthill presiding. Behind Wanamaker on the platform was his own portrait, which had been unveiled at the time of the dedication. If he had wanted a practical demonstration of how usefully his money had been spent, seeing with his own eyes the Madras building in operation was all that could be desired.<sup>1</sup> He found that he had made possible a center not only of real usefulness, but also of the breaking down of caste through Christian teaching. In the restaurant he saw natives of every faith eating together, and remembered what Bishop Potter had told him of his impression of this unique feature of the Wanamaker building in Madras. The bishop had said: "Having learned the subtle and tremendous power of caste, I felt that this great spectacle at Madras was a prophecy of the time when all men will find one table, the table of the Lord Jesus Christ."

That he returned to Ceylon, instead of sailing from Bombay, was because he had in mind going to the Malay States, Singapore, Java, and Siam. The Far East attracted him. He had always wanted to visit China and Japan. Why not go around the world?

This course was urged upon him by cable, following up a family campaign of letters. He hesitated for a few days, drawn both ways, and then made up his mind to return to Europe. From his correspondence we find that the prog-

<sup>1</sup> The Madras building not only supplied local needs, but was also the headquarters of the Y. M. C. A. movement throughout India.



YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION BUILDING, MADRAS, INDIA, PRESENTED BY HON. JOHN WANAMAKER IN 1900

1800

1800

ress of real-estate transactions in New York, and the decisions that were gradually forming in his mind about new store buildings in Philadelphia and New York, influenced him to renounce a dream that was then within his grasp and that was never afterward realized. It was not that he felt that he had to go home immediately. But he was out of touch with his business, and in Paris or London he would have offices and facilities for doing the things in his mind, and could be home at any time within a week.

Although he wanted to go to Cairo, he was now more the merchant than the tourist, and he kept on to Naples. At the Hotel Vesuvius he found a cablegram from Mrs. Wanamaker assuring him that everything was going well and that he could safely stay as long as he wanted. His son Tom sent virtually the same message. He did stay at Naples for a few days, and visited the volcano, and the excavations at Pompeii, Capri, Amalfi, and Sorrento. The daily accounts of his courier indicate that he was traveling alone, and that his beverages were always Apollinaris and black coffee. The lightest of Italian wines did not tempt him.

In the first week of March he was at the Grand Hotel in Rome, and was among those for whom had been secured the precious tickets of admission to St. Peter's on the unique occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of Pope Leo.<sup>1</sup> It was unique; for few popes have been elevated early enough to achieve a reign that brings them to their silver anniversary. On the morning of March 5 he had the additional honor of a private audience with the Pope, to whom he said what he afterwards repeated in an interview with the *Philadelphia Times*:

I was appalled by the condition of the people in India. Out of three hundred million, but one per cent have been influenced by Christianity

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 447.

after one hundred years of labor. The Roman Catholic Church is doing the most effective work, although the Presbyterians are also bravely struggling.

From Rome he went to Pisa to see the Leaning Tower, and to Florence. For years he had longed to revisit the Pitti and Uffizi palaces after he had "read up" on the early masters of the Italian schools. On the edge of a catalogue, he wrote: "I am now rewarded for having studied a bit. Pictures require preparation to appreciate them—like everything else."

From Paris he wrote to Dr. Ewing: "I am inclined to go to Carlsbad for the cure, inasmuch as I am not likely to get any summer vacation and shall be a prisoner in the heat of America while Mrs. Wanamaker and my sons are seeking their vacation." But while the Wanamaker business had reached the point where it would run smoothly without the personal attention of its founder, it needed more than ever his peculiar genius to keep the front place and progress in the face of formidable competition. The time had come to make a decision about the future in New York and to go ahead with the erection of an entirely new building in Philadelphia. This could not be done from Carlsbad! The family thought he was going to Carlsbad, but he crossed to London for Holy Week. He attended the City Temple on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, and sailed for home the next day.

During the week in London he visited the American exhibition at Crystal Palace—always a favorite excursion—and gave an interview to the *Daily Chronicle* on the death of Cecil Rhodes and general conditions of American business. We find in his personal files two letters from Ambassador Choate, who wrote:

I was extremely sorry to miss your call at the Embassy on Saturday—and again not to find you at your hotel when I called yesterday. Will

you do me the honor to lunch with me here to-morrow and if any of your family are with you to bring them? I desire very much to see you, and you will all be most welcome.

And again:

I am so glad you are coming—our lunch is at half past one, but I shall be here till then and the sooner you come the better.

Henniker Heaton, father of penny postage in the British Empire, gave a dinner in Wanamaker's honor at the House of Commons on March 25. It was attended by several members of the Balfour Cabinet, and the host referred to his guest as "the American who has done most for the advance of international postal communications of any man of his day." Renewed contacts with the men met on this occasion proved to be the most interesting and delightful feature of Wanamaker's subsequent visits to London. He was invited to King Edward's coronation, which was to take place a few months later, and promised to return for that event.

When he arrived in New York on April 6, Wanamaker told the reporters that he had now crossed the ocean forty-four times and that the voyage he was concluding had carried him 25,000 miles in four months. "A new world has opened to me through my glimpse of Asia—a world that I only dimly guessed existed when I was in Cairo. Why, I hardly knew where India was before I went there, and I found a continent teeming with millions upon millions, which makes Europe feel small—and our country small and new," he said. On the first Sunday back in his old place at Bethany he declared that the India voyage was an adventure such as he had not experienced since he migrated to Indiana with his family when he was a little boy. "In that crowded other world, my man Dean and I took along our bedding—often our food—just as we had

to do crossing Ohio to Indiana half a century ago. In the East we did not dare to eat their food and sleep in their beds—and generally they would not have allowed us to. The people out there thought we were as unclean as we thought they were—the compliment was returned!”

Wanamaker always wanted to return to the Orient. He was never to have another opportunity. But from that time on he took a deeper and more enthusiastic interest in John R. Mott's conception of the “world rôle” of the Y. M. C. A., in the international possibilities of Sunday-school work, and especially in the forward movement of foreign missions. He had been only vaguely and spasmodically interested before in church work abroad. His new attitude was eloquently expressed at a mass meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. He told the commissioners that, although the government gives some money for education from Indian revenue, the “largest proportion of humanitarian and religious work going on there is traceable to the Christian religion.” He expressed admiration for the business-like way in which the missions were run and defended missionaries from the charge of living extravagantly. Summing up, he said: “In all my life I never saw such an opportunity for the investment of the money that we set apart to give to the Christ who gave Himself for us.”

## CHAPTER VI

### ART AND ARCHÆOLOGY

A MAN in John Wanamaker's position is sure to receive at some time or other an invitation to join every conceivable kind of organization for the promotion and enjoyment of the arts and sciences. Civic and philanthropic societies solicit the rich man for a sustaining membership. Fraternal orders want him to join. Clubs let it be known that he will not have to wait for favorable action to be taken when he is put up for membership. Many hundreds of such invitations were simply filed, and probably none but the biographer has ever gone through them. It would have required most of the time of a secretary just to answer the correspondence and pay the dues of these organizations (the invitations came from all over the world) had Wanamaker attempted to accept the memberships proffered him.

In Philadelphia, however, and later in New York, there were societies and clubs which Wanamaker felt that he ought to join from a sense of civic duty or for business reasons. For instance, he took out fifty memberships for his store staff in the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and carried them for several years, to help the Chamber get on its feet. He also offered a substantial contribution toward a building for the Chamber in 1914. He was a member of civic alliances and associations, nature clubs, conservation movements, and a host of other things. He was a trustee of the Commercial Museum of Philadelphia from its organization in 1895 for several years.<sup>1</sup> He paid

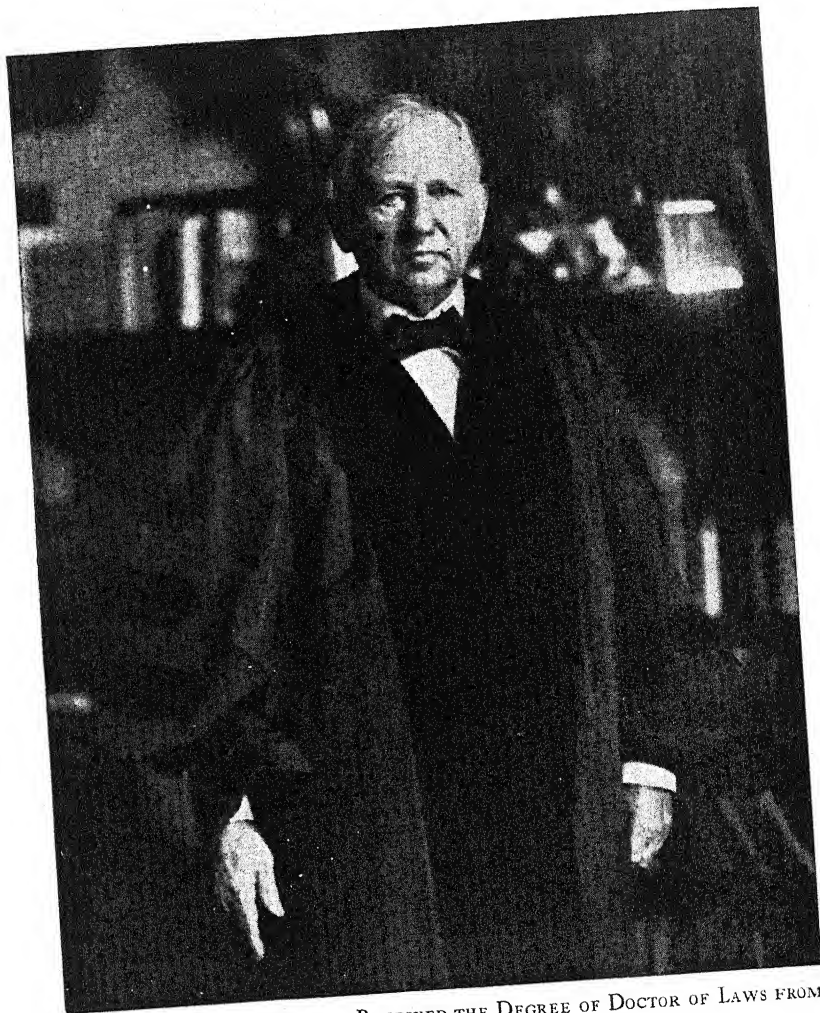
<sup>1</sup> He was one of the three trustees named in the ordinance of Common Council that created the Museum. He aided in gathering specimens of

dues to clubs, but rarely, if ever, used them. The only fraternal order that interested him was the Masonic—and that late in life.

But we do find from Wanamaker's papers that he took a faithful and sustained interest in every organization on whose board he served that had to do with his church, with art, and with archæology.

In the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York his deep interest is evidenced by his never allowing anything to interfere with attending the exhibitions. It was the same with the Art Club of Philadelphia. From the time he first hung pictures in the custom-tailoring department of the lower Chestnut Street store until his death he regarded buying and displaying pictures, and encouraging art exhibitions, as an integral part of the Wanamaker business. He once said that he could no more help buying pictures than the Paris housewife could help buying flowers when she went marketing. It was an apt illustration. For, although the Wanamaker stores sold pictures, they were never regarded as merchandise, and no effort was made to dispose of them and get a quick turn-over as with other goods. They were not goods, bought to sell, any more than the Parisienne's flowers were food, bought to eat. The more striking pictures from the Paris Salon, which he featured from time to time, were not for sale at any price.

Pictures played an important part in John Wanamaker's life, and there is probably no American who did so much to make contemporary European art known in America. But he was not a collector, in the ordinary acceptance of that term. He had his "old masters" at Lindenhurst, plenty of them, and good ones, too. But he was the despair of foreign products, and was an active adviser in arranging them for display, believing that the Museum would be a valuable educational influence and inspiration to Philadelphia business enterprises.



WEARING GOWN IN WHICH HE RECEIVED THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS FROM  
THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, JUNE 17TH, 1915



of dealers and self-styled connoisseurs who could not make money out of him. The correspondence in the private files is illuminating. The indications are clear that European dealers looked upon rich Americans contemptuously, rejecting the idea that Americans possessed either taste or predilection. They assumed that what the American collector was after was the rare picture, pronounced a masterpiece by experts, which was bound\* to increase in value. Possession of the picture would make the owner famous and cause him to be envied. All the American had to do was to be willing to put up the dollars. He could leave the rest safely to the dealer.

How provoked they all were when John Wanamaker turned them down! They lectured and scolded him, and warned him that he could never become a collector without their aid and counsel. For a long time they refused to believe that there was an American who wanted to buy pictures because he liked them—and for no other reason. Wanamaker let them know in no uncertain language that they couldn't tell him what he ought and ought not to like. In the end they stopped pestering him, realizing that here they had an American with ideas of his own, oblivious to the far from disinterested art opinions of others, and one who did not have to look upon the possession of pictures either as a good investment or as a title to fame.

From the early 1880's, when he first began to acquire pictures, Wanamaker was a thoughtful student of mediæval and modern painting. He read a lot. His memory was retentive. He spent time in art galleries. But there were certain influences that formed his taste and that never greatly changed. He had to learn to recognize good drawing, of course; but he was born with a love for the colorful. He was attracted to canvases where the landscapes were gay. He wanted his skies bright, his trees honestly green, and the girl standing in the field beside the river not too

drably dressed. He expected a picture to tell a story; and he could never get up much interest in still lifes, in landscapes without what he called "movement" in them, in *tours de force*, or in paintings that gave him nothing. Often, after pausing before a canvas strikingly executed and that he instinctively knew was good work, he would move on with the comment, "Well I suppose the artist was expressing something or he wouldn't have painted it, but I don't know what it is." He did not like nudes. His women had to be clothed. And he was emphatic in his belief that disgusting realism had no place in art or literature.<sup>1</sup> In defending against the criticism of a friend a Bouguereau by which he set great store, he said, "Art in its highest sense is the expression of ideal beauty."

There we have John Wanamaker in art and in literature—and in religion. A painting, a book, a religious exposition had either to tell a story that attracted or inspired or at least to put a glamour on life, appeal to the emotions, and take one out of oneself. It was a homely philosophy, perhaps—a philosophy at which the Philistine would sneer—but successful for all that throughout a long and rich life. Wanamaker's attitude toward art was his interpretation of Shelley's definition, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." A picture that does not give enjoyment cannot be beautiful. Art should depict the beautiful or teach a lesson. In books and paintings alike Wanamaker sought enjoyment or a message. If he found neither, the book or the painting was meaningless to him.

Wanamaker's first important purchases were well-known pictures of Bouguereau and Rosa Bonheur, battle scenes of Détaillé and de Neuville, a Watteau shepherdess, Troyon

<sup>1</sup> He told the Bethany Bible Union, for instance, that he heartily approved the rejection of Biondi's "Saturnalia" by the directors of the Metropolitan Museum. He cut out and saved a Brisbane editorial on this event, with the sentences underlined: "Art should elevate men—not make pigs of them. Therefore it was an excellent thing to reject Biondi's disgusting work, and Di Cesnola is a goose."

cattle and Schreyer sheep, a Ziem Venetian scene, a Jules Breton peasant girl, and typical canvases of Millet, Corot, Daubigny, and Alma Tadema. To these he soon added a number of portraits by old masters.

In a store editorial written on November 11, 1921, Wanamaker said that he had been "walking one afternoon with Munkácsy in the lovely Duchy of Luxembourg years ago," and that just as "Munkácsy saw nature and passing incidents around him with more than eyes, they will see the most without who have the most within." The reference is to a visit to the Hungarian painter at the Château de Colpach in August, 1887.<sup>1</sup> Munkácsy had learned from Sedelmeyer, the famous Paris dealer, that Wanamaker was at Homburg, and he wired him there. He naturally wanted to see the man who had bought his masterpiece a few months earlier. Munkácsy's "Christ Before Pilate" had a sensational success for several years in Europe before it was brought to America by Sedelmeyer in 1886. This huge canvas, which is still spoken of as "the most widely discussed picture of recent times,"<sup>2</sup> was being exhibited all over the country when Wanamaker bought it. The next

<sup>1</sup> Munkácsy died in 1900, and his widow sent his palette to John Wanamaker. In her letter she said: "I could not have offered to one more worthy than you this precious souvenir of the one whom you so much admired and whose grand qualities of heart and loyalty you appreciated. My affectionate greetings to your adorable wife and dear children." Twenty years after the first visit Wanamaker returned to Colpach to pay his respects to Madame Munkácsy. In his diary we find a spirited entry concerning this second visit: "August 8, 1907. We left Ems at 11:15 in the auto and expected to arrive at Castle Colpach for dinner. Through misdirection we got out of our way 75 kilometers. Worse yet, it had grown dark, and the roads were narrow and rough, and still worse, we had a heavy thunderstorm. I really became afraid—first in being in a machine with an electric light in it and a store of petrol, and second, I felt we were at the mercy of ruffians and robbers, and without a pistol. I put one purse in one stocking and the other and a roll of bills in the other stocking. . . . August 9. In this old-fashioned house—bright with sun, and a copper beach nodding to me in the park under the window. I have just come from a simple but long talk at breakfast, after attending mass from 7:10 to 7:30 with Madame M. It is a lovely visit to have, and they pleaded with me to stay some days, but my cure calls me back to Ems this afternoon."

<sup>2</sup> *Literary Digest*, December 13, 1924.

year he purchased from the same Paris dealer Munkácsy's "Christ on Calvary," which had followed "Christ Before Pilate" over the United States. Never before or since have single pictures been taken around this country and made money. The two great canvases went back to Europe in 1889 to be hung in the Austro-Hungarian pavilion at the Paris Exposition, and they were exhibited four years later at the Chicago World's Fair. Since then they have been at Lindenhurst and the Philadelphia store.

In the 1880's Munkácsy had a great vogue in Europe as well as in America, and the pictures Wanamaker bought were undoubtedly his most startling work. How much Wanamaker prized them as the art of a great master and how much as teaching the lesson of Christ's humiliation and death, it is impossible to say. Both before and since they passed into Wanamaker's hands the Munkácsy paintings have had a great influence upon all who have seen them, and they are probably the most widely known pictures in the United States.

Another illustration of Wanamaker's interest in a picture with a message was his purchase of Pierre Fritel's "Les Conquérants," which was the most-talked-of contribution to the 1892 Salon. It was acquired by John Wanamaker the following year. "The Conquerors" is an allegorical composition, representing the triumphal progress of the military heroes of history, who ride relentlessly forward through an avenue lined with ghastly corpses. In the front row are Sesostris, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, and behind them Attila, Charlemagne, Tamerlane, and others, their arms and standards stretching away into the black night. A generation of Philadelphians has grown up with "The Conquerors" as a familiar lesson of the ruthlessness and folly of war. It was exactly what Wanamaker had in mind when he bought the picture. Fritel had

preached with his brush. It was always a great satisfaction to Wanamaker that the interest in the Munkacsy and Fritel canvases, and in others of a similar nature that followed, was sustained through decades. For more than a quarter of a century he kept collecting sermons inspired by them.

In 1893 Wanamaker began to buy pictures of contemporary artists at the Paris Salon. It became a regular feature of his annual trip to Europe, and year after year he managed to get to Paris while the Salon was open. It would have been a calamity had he not done so; for through his numerous purchases he had become known as "le Providence du Salon" or, more affectionately and irreverently, "le bonpapa des artistes français qui en ont besoin"—an expression which, with a very slight change, made a delicious *double entendre*.

So well received were these Salon purchases in Philadelphia and New York, and so enthusiastic did Wanamaker become over the artists of the day, that in 1903 he said to his Paris representative: "We have not been buying many pictures these last years; maybe we were not liberal enough about prices. Let us go through the Salon." Wanamaker was as alert and unfatigued at the end of a day as at the beginning. He was meticulous in his examination, and he would mark in the catalogue he carried what canvases he wanted and the prices he would pay. The Paris office man was frightened when he added up the list and found that the amount came to over a million francs. So he went to Wanamaker and told him this. Without hesitation came the answer, "You were directed to buy all you could."

To illustrate Wanamaker's mind and methods in the purchase of pictures we do not have to depend upon the reminiscences of his associates. In his diary for 1903 we find entries about the Paris Salons:

May 13,

There are over 6,000 paintings in the Salon this year in the two Exhibitions, and scarcely 100 of them will live, yet among the fellows doing this, their first work, there may be another Millais, Daubigny or Turner. The crowds surge to and fro, hurrying to see the exhibition. So many persons interested in art is something to see and think about. France seems to be very proud of her record as the patron of art. I wonder when America will have a School of Art, subsidized by the Government, drawing our young men and women about it. Twice I went to the Salon to-day, and spent 5 or 6 hours there.

May 14,

The day carried me about the streets and into the shops I wanted to study, and twice again to the Salon to review my judgment on pictures. I dined with some Americans and met two artists at 10:15 here in my rooms to talk for an hour on pictures. It is fascinating to be in touch with people who are closely studying and talking art all the time.

May 16,

The evening I gave to the American Art Association, who had their annual entertainment. The American colony was out in force to cheer and stand by their 2,000 art students in Paris. They were kind enough to give me the Ambassador's box and I took a party of Americans.

May 18,

I went again to both Salons until 4, and then drove for nearly two hours in the Bois.

May 20,

First: The Real Estate men about a store in Paris. What do you think? Who can tell what this foolish man will do next? Then visits to certain central possible blocks. Next an engagement to go away off into old Paris. My visit was for the murals from the Boscoreale—49 of them—of surpassing importance. They are to be sold next month and there is a standing offer by the Berlin Museum for them of 1,500,000 marks! If I were able, I would buy them for Philadelphia. Then a ride in the marvelous underground,  $3/4$  around Paris to our artist's studio, all so queerly interesting to see 400 crayons of the famous drawings now publishing of Quo Vadis;—a singularly interesting man, this Russian is. I bought two paintings from him because I think he is a rising man. Then to my office for an hour. Then to a luncheon that I gave to six people. Afterwards to the Salon for the ninth time, and then a drive and at night an opera party—Romeo and Juliet.

More than two hundred and fifty pictures were acquired from the 1903 Salon. The year before Wanamaker had bought the entire studio collection of the Bohemian painter, Brozik, some three hundred paintings, water-colors, and sketches.<sup>1</sup> There had been a mild remonstrance at the time. When he started homeward in 1903 Wanamaker laughingly confessed to friends that he was afraid to tell his sons how many pictures he had bought. This explains the diary entry on the homeward voyage: "I'm glad the invoices will not get there before me. Dear me, I must break the Salon news gently!" We can only surmise that the one to whom the news had to be broken gently was Thomas B. Wanamaker, who would be looking upon the practical side of the question—where display them all? Wanamaker loved to boast affectionately of his older son, whom he called "a terrible fellow, generally so uncomfortably right when he gets after me." The other son, Rodman, who had lived many years in Paris and was also susceptible to pictures and artists, would understand more easily how the two hundred and fifty had happened.<sup>2</sup>

When the new Lindenhurst was built and there were new store buildings in both cities, it was possible to display the the Wanamaker collections to great advantage. Except for the war years, even though John Wanamaker did not go to Europe during the last decade of his life, the Salon purchases were kept up, and the Wanamaker exhibitions

<sup>1</sup> In 1902 Wanamaker "fell from grace," as he himself put it, in London also. He sent home 118 numbers from the walls of the exhibition of the Institute of Painters in Water Colors. In 1903, in London, the diary records that after breakfast at the Bath Club with art critics, he "went to the Royal Gallery and saw this year's pictures. My friends limited our looking to the best 20 and we skimmed the rest afterwards—then on to a private exhibition of Sargent's early sketches." But there is no mention of wholesale buying in London that year.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the older Wanamaker recognized that the stores could not advantageously hang or handle all the pictures that he had bought in 1902 and 1903. He was quite glad to take some of them to his own account. He purchased many pictures from the two stores in December, 1903. Several were sent to Bethany, and the rest were divided between his town house and Lindenhurst.

have given to the people of Philadelphia and New York a better opportunity than any public gallery or museum afforded of knowing what contemporary French artists are doing. When John Wanamaker was made an officer of the Legion of Honor by the French government in 1911, his services to contemporary French art were mentioned as calling forth the grateful recognition of France.

With all his love for contemporary art, John Wanamaker realized that the popular education he was so eager to give could not be other than one-sided if only living painters were represented in the store canvases. Many of the pictures that he wanted were unobtainable altogether. So he had copies made from the originals that he liked in European museums and collections. Among the most noteworthy of these were reproductions of all the beautiful Nattier portraits and of historical pictures in the Versailles galleries. Statues that appealed to him in the Louvre were also copied, some of them in bronze, and spread about the stores. Through his son Rodman he became acquainted with the work of H. O. Tanner, whose choice of religious subjects greatly appealed to him, and of Frederic C. Frieseke, who was commissioned to paint the mural decorations in the auditorium of the New York Wanamaker's.

To encourage artists at home he started students' art exhibitions annually in the Philadelphia store, and gave advanced students the opportunity to show and sell their work at no cost to themselves. And then was launched a children's Christmas drawing competition for first efforts, with no sketch by an exhibitor under fourteen left out. Every entry was hung!

Merchant always, with a genius for display, Wanamaker was particularly interested in showing pictures in such a way that each one would have the maximum of appeal. He hated the bizarre or incongruous in the display of anything beautiful, and he disliked to see pictures crowded

together. That was his objection to most museums in the Old World and the New. The effect of the finest things was destroyed by crowding. The eye was bewildered, as in a three-ring circus. "In museums," he once declared, "'most everything looks like junk even when it isn't, because there is no care or thought in the display. If women would wear their fine clothes like galleries wear their pictures, they'd be laughèd at." He contended that one did have to think long before admitting the truth of the paradox that what is not for sale is still for sale. Whatever the possession you prize, when others see it you want to sell it to them. You may not want to be paid with money and you may not want to transfer the physical possession of the thing to another. But you do want the person to whom you show it to pay for it in admiration and intelligent appreciation. Everything that is lovely, everything that is worth while, therefore, needs the use of the merchant instinct to show it off to best advantage.

Developing this idea to his store people, Wanamaker said that the windows were a pretty good indication of what the store people thought of the goods they had to sell. Perhaps it was for training in the æsthetic sense or challenging the ingenuity of his decorating staff that he ordered occasionally a whole window to be given to one book or picture. In the last year of his life he entered with enthusiasm into the competition of Chestnut Street stores for the best handling of a work of art in the store window during Philadelphia Art Week. With Beatrice Fenton's bronze seaweed fountain, loaned by the Fairmount Park Commission, he won the gold medal.

Wanamaker's taste in pictures and his knowledge of them is also indicated by the Bethany programs and souvenirs of over half a century. They give a more striking proof than either his private galleries or his store collections that John Wanamaker traveled farther and developed more in

his artistic than in his literary taste. In pictures he got out of the realm of the obvious and purely sentimental appeal. He came to have a fund of information concerning, and a strong liking for, a wide variety of pictures scattered in the collections from Madrid to Petrograd. For program and menu covers and for souvenirs prepared for church and Sunday-school organizations at Bethany and John Chambers Memorial it is evident he took the greatest pains in the choice of pictures to be reproduced. The mechanical work had to be just right; and as he owned a printing plant capable of the finest reproduction, he was able to get pictures printed to his satisfaction. Lithographs and steel engravings that he particularly liked he sometimes thought of years afterward, and it was a function of those who surrounded him to know what these were, to see that the plates were carefully preserved, and to be able to bring a plate out at a moment's notice if he should ask, say in 1920, for a Murillo Holy Family that had been used for a Bethany Christmas program in 1890.

Every form of art interested Wanamaker. He was as enthusiastic about the binding of books, jewelry, embroideries, porcelains, stone and iron work, and antique furniture as he was about paintings. One of the great joys of general storekeeping was that he could deal in all these things, could feel that he was influencing the taste of the people, and could bring pressure to bear upon manufacturers to cultivate their imagination and artistic sense.

Sometimes, with other things as well as with pictures, he felt that he must live with them before making up his mind. It was this way with the things that he bought from the German building at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. There he purchased the furnishings of a gentleman's study and anteroom; many pieces of bronze and furniture, antique and new, that were in vogue at the time; two copper fountain groups; Darmstadt living and dining rooms;

a Magdeburg gentleman's study; a Karlsruhe music festival hall; and ecclesiastical and profane art works from Cologne. Some of these were quickly discarded; others were made into rooms in his private offices in Philadelphia and he wished he hadn't;<sup>1</sup> and a few of the purchases stood the test of time and became permanent additions to the store and to Lindenhurst.

Wanamaker's interest in archæology and paleontology was intense, and embraced research work in Europe and America. He co-operated with Provost William Pepper of the University of Pennsylvania to found the archæological museum, and presented its first collections of Indian antiquities and Italian bronzes. He was elected a manager of the University Museum in 1895, and became vice-president in 1905, a position which he held until his death. In 1901 he bought for the museum an important collection illustrating the ethnology of the Southwest aborigines, and the same year he made possible the acquisition by the Museum of the Indian antiquities collected by Thomas Blaine Donaldson in Idaho and Indiana. In 1900 he had financed an expedition to the Indian tribes of the far West, under the auspices of the Museum, and presented everything that Dr. Stewart Culin brought back. In 1902, when he was in Naples, he ordered from the Chiurazzi foundry, at the same time as Andrew Carnegie, a set of reproductions of all the bronzes found at Pompeii and Herculaneum. This collection of nearly 400 pieces he allowed Chiurazzi to exhibit at the St. Louis Exposition in the Royal Italian Pavilion, and then gave it to the University Museum. The only other collections of the kind—at that time—were the

<sup>1</sup> The diary in August, 1911, says: "I write this in the new Dining Room of the new offices that are not so artistic as they might be, although they have endeavored to follow the pattern that had been set. . . . The two rooms after the corner room, along Juniper Street, are St. Louis rooms, and they (to me) do not seem to fit together. They are convenient, though—light and airy."

originals in the National Museum of Naples and a duplicate set in the Field Museum, Chicago.

Wanamaker was a faithful attendant at the meetings of the Board of Directors of the University Museum, and he was an invaluable counselor in arranging and putting through the ambitious building program of twenty-five years. We find in his diary, written in the lecture-room of the Museum on December 15, 1911, when he was waiting for a quorum of the Board:

How much improved this Museum is. It is not as large as the British Museum, but it is not any smaller than that Museum once was.

In 1916 he financed an expedition, under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, to Alaska, for the purpose of studying the manners and customs of the natives and of procuring specimens of their work, history, and handicraft. To the finds of this expedition he added several other collections that had been previously made, and he was intensely interested in the contents of the cases when they arrived. He made suggestions as to their display, and on three occasions, when the curators spoke of objects that were lacking, he asked if they were procurable anywhere, and authorized the Museum to get them.

In Italy, Wanamaker's interest in archæology was based upon his personal contacts. He had financed Indian and Alaskan expeditions because of his life-long interest in American aborigines, and his faithful service on the Board of the University Museum was not uninfluenced by the personal element. Provost Pepper had been a warm friend, and there was hardly a man whom John Wanamaker admired more and liked more to be with than Provost Charles Custis Harrison. In Italy, on the other hand, his archæological interest had been awakened and was sustained by visits to the places where digging was going on. In 1895 Professor Frothingham's work at Orvieto was being subsidized by Wanamaker, and the next year he got Provost

Pepper and Mrs. Sarah Y. Stevenson, of the American Exploration Society, interested in what Frothingham was doing.

The private files show that Wanamaker's enthusiasm for digging in Italy led him, when he was traveling there, to make promises of subsidies sometimes impulsively—and not always wisely! It was hard for him to resist the man who would take him by the arm and lead him to a spot, and say, "Right here where we are standing I am sure that there is ——" Then the tragic air: "But of course I have no money—and it would cost so little!" Wanamaker had the money and his curiosity was aroused. Although it was his habit to be cautious in the amounts he promised (he never gave *carte blanche*) it was not the money part of it that bothered him when he got into an undertaking of this kind. He was willing to pay. But when it dragged on—as excavations always do—or nothing came of the proposals to which he had agreed, his interest would not down. Wanamaker was like that—put him on a trail and he wanted to follow it right to the end.

An instance of this was the attempt to excavate the supposed site of the oratory of Priscilla and Aquila. When Wanamaker and Lowrie were in Rome in the spring of 1903 they were on the Aventine with James Gordon Gray, pastor of an English church in Rome. In the Church of St. Prisca the parson guide pointed out from the veranda to the south of the church the proposed site of the first Roman oratory. "I am sure that it was there," he said, dramatically, "that was held the earliest prayer meeting in Rome."

"Do you mean to say that the house of Priscilla and Aquila is under that garden?" exclaimed Wanamaker.

"Yes, sir, I mean it," answered Dr. Gray.

"Uncover it," said Wanamaker, enthusiastically. "I'll provide the funds."

The love of digging and the thought that he was going to contribute something new to the historical knowledge of the early Church combined to prompt Wanamaker to give Dr. Gray a check on the spot. There followed years of effort and negotiations and correspondence. Excavations were made in the garden of the monastery almost immediately. But no trace of a first-century house was found. The next year Dr. Gray learned that a scholar working in the Bibliothèque Nationale had turned up information in an old manuscript indicating that the oratory might be under the substructure of the church itself. He wrote about this to Wanamaker, who was then in Paris, suggesting some one be sent to the library to check up on this new light. It was promptly done, and Wanamaker ordered application to be made to the Ministry at Rome for permission to sink a shaft in front of the church. This was granted, and it was not long before the workmen reached brick arches that might have dated from the first century. Then suddenly the permission was withdrawn, the reason being given that the church might be damaged.

For years Dr. Gray sought to be allowed to start the work again, and he kept Wanamaker informed. Just before the war broke out, Professor Lanciani, in a lecture at the University of Rome, spoke of the possibility of finding the oratory and alluded to John Wanamaker's generosity and enthusiasm. The original funds in Dr. Gray's hands had not all been spent. In 1914 he wrote to ask what he should do. Wanamaker's response was to continue the effort to find the oratory.

The uncertainty and inexhaustibility of archaeological research work appealed strongly to a man of Wanamaker's temperament. There was always something ahead! And in art, if the work of contemporaries attracted him more than that of old masters, was it not because he was dealing with a living creative force, always changing?

## CHAPTER VII

### ADVENTURES WITH AUTOMOBILES

MORE than any other characteristic, it was Wanamaker's alert receptiveness to new ideas that made his fortune and that enabled him to become an undisputed pioneer in so many lines in the industrial and mercantile development of the United States. At a conference of postal clerks in Washington, when he was Postmaster-General, he said:

"I don't think that any one man knows it all; each of us may learn, from the highest official down to the lowest. We are very foolish people if we shut our ears and eyes to what other people are doing. I often pick up things from strangers, and from reading. What others are doing suggests to me the solution of many a problem that has been puzzling me, the existence of many a new mercantile opportunity I was unaware of."

We have seen how true this statement was of the boy who sold clothes on Market Street, of the young proprietor of Oak Hall, and of the enterprising merchant who found himself—somewhat to his dismay at first—with a mammoth store, too large for just masculine needs, on his hands in 1876. He read about Edison after his eye had caught the electrical exhibits at the Franklin Institute in 1874 and the Centennial Exhibition. So he went to Menlo Park. Electricity solved his problems of lighting, ventilation, and transportation to upper floors. Had they remained unsolved the development of the great general store would have been impossible.

One of the amusing stories of the infancy of the telephone industry has to do with Wanamaker's interest in Bell's invention. Bell's men were having a hard time to get people to pay attention to what was regarded as a toy. But Wanamaker, seeing its possibilities, agreed to have a demonstration at his house. The proprietor of the Grand Depot had just moved into a substantial residence, 1336 Walnut Street, and Mrs. Wanamaker had seen that the furnishings did justice to the house. The group invited to the Bell telephone demonstration came to what was really a house-warming. The apparatus, consisting of two instruments, wires and batteries, was connected up from a room on the third floor to the parlor, the wires being laid on the stairs and through doorways. In order to prove that no fraud was being perpetrated, all doors were closed upon the wire. The demonstrator's assistant, in his anxiety and hurry, tripped on the wire and upset the battery, spilling acid on Mrs. Wanamaker's parlor carpet. The hopes of enthusiastic Wanamaker support were sunk in a gaping hole that grew before the dismayed eyes of the Bell men. The luckless youth who didn't think of the wire afterward became a high official in the Bell Telephone Company. His awkwardness may have postponed, but it did not prevent, Wanamaker's early adoption of the telephone, and his later use of it far beyond any merchant of his day.<sup>1</sup>

When the portable gasoline engine was first being tried in a timid way in horseless carriages by experimenters in

<sup>1</sup> The Bell Telephone Company of Philadelphia was organized in 1879, and in the directory for February—the first one issued—the Wanamaker store was one of the 269 subscribers. *Telephone News* for June 8, 1906, says that Wanamaker's was the first store to install a private exchange, and that in the new Philadelphia building, the private exchange called for 3,000 stations, 2,000,000 local messages a year, and 120 trunk lines to the central office. The switchboard, run by twelve operators, connected up nearly 19,000 miles of wire within the store. It was "the largest store system in the world—larger than the three next largest combined in Philadelphia; larger than the largest two combined in New York City."

France, it is not surprising that Wanamaker spent days in Paris investigating the practicability and the merits of the different types of light gasoline engines that were being evolved. He was one of the first automobile owners in America. But, unlike other rich men, he saw in his car unlimited possibilities. His engineers had already been experimenting with electric vehicles and "steamers." Wanamaker put them on the gasoline engine. In that period of rapid evolution in the United States as well as in France, Germany, and England, it required time and thought for any man to keep up with the new developments in transportation. Wanamaker gave both.

The strongest appeal of mechanical transportation to the merchant who used hundreds of wagons for delivery and hauling was the doing away with cruelty to animals. He had long found it impossible to make his drivers always treat their horses right. Not easily excited by complaints, he was quick to anger when anyone wrote in that a Wanamaker driver had been abusing his horses. Whips were forbidden on Wanamaker wagons, but there were other ways of being merciless to the horses, pulling too heavy loads up grades, standing without blankets on cold days, being driven lame. Such incidents were bound to happen. They were generally brought to his attention. It was difficult sometimes to trace them and get the truth of the matter. What a blessed relief if horseless wagons and trucks could be developed! <sup>1</sup>

Another consideration that Wanamaker had in mind long

<sup>1</sup> This thought is mentioned several times in memoranda and in letters of the period when Wanamaker was first considering mechanical transportation. Cruelty to animals he abhorred. Several of his store editorials of a later period emphasize the fact that the man who was cruel to animals would also be inconsiderate in his treatment of his fellow-men. He gave this reason for disapproving of animal acts in circuses and vaudeville. In one editorial he declared: "To ill-treat animals or human beings to extort greater service is shameful."

before the change from horses to motor-drawn vehicles was expediting deliveries and shortening the inevitably long hours of employees in this branch of the organization. As cities grew and people lived farther away and in the suburbs, the problem of getting purchases from the center of town to the homes of the people was becoming serious. And all the time the expense of delivery was increasing.

Wanamaker thought these things through. He believed that it was good business and of public interest for a merchant in his position to be experimenting with the new ideas. In the delivery field, as in all other phases of merchandising, Wanamaker was determined to keep ahead of the procession. He tried electric wagons, and was as prompt to discard them (except for light work in town) as he had been to take them up. Experiments under his personal direction indicated that gasoline-driven engines were undoubtedly the best and most economical for vans and trucks, and gave them a far wider radius. Later he came to the same decision for the smaller delivery wagons. This is why he was the pioneer both in Philadelphia and New York in the use of gasoline-driven vans and trucks, and one of the first to substitute gasoline for electricity in his other wagons.<sup>1</sup>

From the first, Wanamaker was an enthusiastic motorist. He liked the sensation of going fast, of covering a lot of ground, and the only kind of back-seat driving he did was to call for more speed. When traffic signals first began to operate, he was greatly annoyed; he never did more than resign himself to the policeman's hand. "Like a horse,

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker's was by far the largest general store in Philadelphia during this period of change. In New York, according to Morris D. Hall in the *Scientific American*, October 26, 1912, Macy's was pressing Wanamaker pretty closely in facilities for delivery, but the figures indicated Wanamaker's faith in the gasoline-driven engine. They are: Macy stables, 150 wagons and 200 horses; Wanamaker stables, 150 wagons and 275 horses; Macy garage, 7 gasoline and 35 electric vehicles; Wanamaker garage, 70 gasoline and 5 electric vehicles.

champing at the bit, he always was, if I may say so, sir," his chauffeur told the biographer. But he was a good sport in accepting the inconveniences of pneumatic tires and the uncertainties that used to attend dependence upon an engine more than now. His experience with other innovations and his unbounded faith in the ingenuity and perseverance of American engineers, made him say of automobiles, as he had said of electric lights and telephones and elevators: "They'll get better all the time. Let us laugh now; if we wait, we shall forget that these things ever happened, or, if they do, wonder why it was."

Just as he thought of mechanical transportation as an aid to the work of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, of which he was an ardent member, so he saw in motoring the channel for "the irresistible spread" of the better roads movement which bicycling and his own rural free delivery had done so much to foster. This opinion is expressed with uncanny prescience and precision in a letter written in 1897.

It is small wonder, then, that Wanamaker foresaw and believed in the possibilities of automobiles for everybody at a time when it seemed to be the universal opinion that their prohibitive price would keep them in the luxury class. In his long merchandising experience Wanamaker had heard that kind of talk before about other commodities, notably bicycles. There had been a time—only ten years earlier—when bicycling was the sport of the well-to-do. Wanamaker had refused to accept this "fact." He had patent laws examined by his lawyers, figured out the royalties that would have to be paid in making up a bicycle, and contracted with a manufacturer to put a bicycle on the market, at the merchant's risk, at less than half the price that was being asked for standard makes. Everybody began to ride.

Why could not the same be done with automobiles?

This question was in Wanamaker's mind when he read that a Detroit mechanic, Henry Ford, who had attracted attention by racing cars of his own construction, was forming a company to manufacture automobiles within the reach of everybody. His title to do this was based upon his simple engine. During the first year less than a thousand Ford cars were sold—virtually none of them in the East—but the company, which had heretofore received attention only because of the racing excellence of its car, now came before the public as defendant in a patent suit. George B. Selden, a New York lawyer, obtained a patent for a gasoline engine in the early days of experimenting, which he later contended covered all vehicles propelled by internal-combustion engines. He never manufactured motor-cars himself, but when the automobile industry was launched, he held up manufacturers for license fees.<sup>1</sup> As he did not demand all that the traffic would bear and there was a large margin of profit in the early luxury cars, the manufacturers paid tribute to Selden to avoid litigation. Ford could not carry out his idea if he had to pay royalties to Selden. He asserted that his engine differed in principle from the engine protected by the Selden patent. With the encouragement of the licensed manufacturers, who wanted to prevent the competition of a cheap car of demonstrated excellence (Ford had been the sensation at the Madison Square show in the autumn of 1903), Selden entered suit. He won a prelimi-

<sup>1</sup> In a statement made at Dearborn on October 6, 1925, when the first Ford airplane was starting out for Mineola, Henry Ford said: "The aviation industry is bigger in possibilities than anything else in the world—too big to be a one-man patent concern, too big to be any one man's contribution to the science. Patents are silly things when they are used to hinder any industry. No man has a right to profit from a patent only. That produces parasites, men who are willing to lay back on their oars and do nothing. If any reward is due the man whose brain has produced something new and good he should get it through profits from the manufacture and sale of that thing."

nary decision in the lower court, which required Ford to put up a bond.

The American League of Automobile Manufacturers, commonly called the A. L. A. M., saw the opportunity to run the Ford car out of the market by frightening prospective purchasers. A nation-wide campaign was undertaken in every center where the Ford car was making its appearance to warn buyers against damage suits. They were told that the law would hold them responsible individually for infringement of the Selden patent, and it was announced that dealers would be made codefendants with the Ford Motor Company. The first agency had just been started in New York by Charles Duerr on 38th Street. We shall let Mr. Duerr tell the story of what happened in the summer of 1904 shortly after he had closed the contract for the agency:

"I received a wire from Mr. Couzens [now Mayor of Detroit], requesting me to come to the factory, offering to pay all the expenses. On my arrival there Mr. Ford took me out into the shop. We sat on boxes and talked things over pleasantly while, of course, he whittled a stick. As a matter of fact the company had no money to defend the Selden patent suit. John Wanamaker, however, in consideration of being given the agency for New York and Philadelphia, had offered to undertake the defense of the suit in New York. You must understand that the A. L. A. M. had brought the suit against me as agent so that the trial should take place in a New York court. The Ford Company, of course, was also made a party to the suit."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The biographer submitted the statement of Mr. Duerr to Senator Couzens, who wrote from Washington on June 13, 1924: "It is true that we secured the relinquishing of the agency to Mr. Duerr by paying him a stipulated sum. Then we gave the agency for Ford cars to John Wanamaker, in both New York and Philadelphia. The reason for this, however, was not because the Ford Motor Company had no money to defend the Selden patent suit, because we were vigorously defending it. The Ford Motor Company recog-

Ford was anxious to have the agency in Wanamaker's hands before the autumn automobile show in New York. So Couzens was authorized to purchase from Duerr a release from the contract, and the Ford agency in New York was transferred to John Wanamaker. At that time there were only about twelve hundred Ford cars—perhaps less—in use. New York knew the car only as a racing machine, and Ford as a racer. The name had not appeared in advertising; newspaper files bear witness to the fact that slight attention had been paid outside automobile circles, which were then restricted in numbers and influence, to the Selden-Ford litigation; and the great mass of people did not know that there was an automobile to be had at a figure within the reach of all. It remained for John Wanamaker to introduce Henry Ford in characteristic advertisements, which have become as historic as they were at the time prophetic.

We reproduce two of these without apology for their length. For they mark the beginning of what has proved to be an epoch of miraculous transformation in transportation conditions throughout the world.

The first advertisement, illustrated with caricatures of "the Bogey Man" and "the scarecrow," was:

nized what John Wanamaker's name meant in merchandising, and that his public advertisement to guarantee purchasers was much better than the Ford Motor Company's advertisement to guarantee purchasers. I want to point out that Mr. Wanamaker did nothing but a strictly business act, took no risk, and gave no aid that cost him anything. I do not want to have the Ford Motor Company placed in the position that they got something for nothing."

The published figures of the assets of the Ford Motor Company in August, 1904, do not indicate, however, the disposition of a sum sufficient to defend an action against a dealer in New York, or to do counter-advertising against the A. L. A. M.'s announcements and threats. It was not until 1909 that the Ford Motor Company's earnings enabled it to take all risks and costs of litigation from the shoulders of agents. We feel that the historian of the future will not fail to record and appraise justly the intervention of John Wanamaker in 1904, which seems to have been overlooked by biographers of Henry Ford up to the present time.

When you buy a Ford motor car from John Wanamaker you are guaranteed against any trouble with the Trust. That's all the insurance any man will want.

Remember that John Wanamaker will take care of all his customers in any litigation growing out of the infringement suits over the Ford car, without a cent of cost to any of them.

Don't give \$600 to the Bogey Man.

The Ford Motor Car, with tonneau, is a double cylinder machine, seating four people, and its price is \$900.

The cheapest two-seated tonneau sold by the Trust is \$1,500.

Henry Ford has proven that he has the highest mechanical ability in the construction of automobiles by building the speediest racer, and he has indicated an extraordinary gift in distancing competitors on the race track.

Henry Ford has distanced his competitors in his commercial production even more than in racing. And it hurts.

The Ford Motor Car cannot be beaten by the Trust in competition; so they have erected a scarecrow to frighten the buying public.

The smart crow knows that there is always corn where the scarecrow is; and the man who wants to get his money's worth when buying an automobile can depend on it that all these suits against the Ford Motor Car Co. are brought only because the Trust realizes that it can't compete with Henry Ford and his splendid \$800 and \$900 cars.

We believe that the Selden Patent is worthless. The Trust had three suits in court against the Ford Motor Car Co. before it started the suits against John Wanamaker. One suit would be plenty, if Selden and his licensees were seeking to uphold their rights. But when persecution is the object, and when the public is to be frightened from buying the best cars made at the price, then the more noise they can make, the bigger they think their Bogey Man will look.

This statement is made at this time to relieve any apprehension that might be created in the minds of those who have purchased or shall purchase Ford machines through us.

Don't pay \$600 too much to the Bogey Man.

The second advertisement, which followed several days later, when New York was wondering who Ford was and what it was all about, answered questions that had been raised:

Henry Ford made the "scoop" of 1904 in building a popular-priced motor car with a double opposed cylinder motor.

Other manufacturers realized their mistake after it was too late to change their machinery. They might build a car to compete with the Ford if they had prepared for it; but it would cost something like a hundred thousand dollars to change their plants in order to do it; and that's out of the question.

Thus Henry Ford's shrewdness makes the Ford Motor Car stand above all others at a popular price—that is, for the man who has eight or nine hundred dollars to invest in a car.

The Trust realizes that its single-cylinder cars can't compete with the Ford double cylinder car, so it brings out the tom-toms, and starts a war dance around any man who has the temerity to sell the Ford cars to the public.

Of course, the Trust doesn't expect the noise of the tom-toms and its straw-stuffed scarecrows to frighten John Wanamaker. If the Selden patent were of any value the Trust could shut up every factory outside of the Trust in short order. It isn't necessary to congest the courts with a lot of petty cases when a man can establish the validity of his patent rights.

The Trust is not taking any notice of the fifty or so other unlicensed automobile manufacturers who are using the Selden patent. They can be met with competitive cars. But the Ford can't be so met. So out come the tom-toms and scarecrows to frighten you.

These suits don't frighten the unlicensed manufacturers; and they don't frighten John Wanamaker. We know the threats to be harmless. But they are hoping that you don't know that; and they want to scare you into buying a Trust car that isn't half as good as the Ford.

It's all right to say "Boo!" to the goose; but that's a poor argument to use to frighten a grown-up man who wants to get the best automobile for his money.

Remember that John Wanamaker will take care of all his customers in any litigation growing out of infringement suits without a cent of cost to any of them.

Get a Ford Motor Car and enjoy it. We'll attend to the tom-toms.

Motorists of the early days, who followed the shows of twenty years ago, will remember the unique Wanamaker advertising, with the pert cartoons. And if they can get

themselves back to their knowledge and attitude of those days, they will remember that they asked themselves, "What is this Ford car, anyway?" They had not heard of it before, but because John Wanamaker was handling it they felt that it must have some solid merit. The commonplaces of to-day were the novelties of yesterday. Up to the end of 1904, including the cars sold by Wanamaker in New York and Philadelphia, exactly 1,708 Ford automobiles had been sold. In 1905 and 1906 the annual output was about the same. It was not until the summer of 1906 that ten cars a day—regarded as a great feat—was reached.

John Wanamaker is on record at the time as saying that he had little interest in any automobile as a merchandising proposition, and that he had taken on the Ford agency only because he felt that someone had to stand behind the movement to make automobiles a commodity and not a luxury. He had faith in Ford and admiration for his achievement when few, if any, realized that it was an achievement.<sup>1</sup> Dealing in automobiles was not the function of a general storekeeper, whose merchandising field should be limited, in Wanamaker's opinion, "to articles that can conveniently and gracefully be taken in and out of the store." There was endless annoyance, too, about applying the Wanamaker rules of guaranty and exchange to an article of merchandise still confessedly in the experimental stage. When he felt

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Rodman Wanamaker is his father's son in his faith in Ford. On October 8, 1925, the New York Wanamaker advertisement stated that the J. W.—1, the first "Ford of the air" to be offered commercially, would arrive that afternoon from Ford Airport, Dearborn, Mich., and that it would be "the first Stout all-metal airplane made by the Ford Motor Company to be placed on sale in the first airplane department in a store." In 1909, John Wanamaker had cabled an order to Blériot the day of his successful Channel flight, and six weeks later was able to put on sale the first airplane ever offered commercially. In 1914 Rodman Wanamaker built the first airplane for transatlantic flight, which he called the *America*. The outbreak of war made impossible the attempt to cross the Atlantic, and the giant airplane was used by the British air service.

that the cheaper car had come to stay and that the Selden contention, though not settled, could no longer keep automobiles a luxury, the Ford agency was given up. Ten years were to pass before Ford was to invite Wanamaker into "another adventure," as he called his Peace Ship. But of that later.

In gathering the testimony of those who helped Wanamaker in his early adventures with automobiles, we come across an interesting fact to which we find no reference in Wanamaker's speeches and letters. The diary of the year in which it occurred unfortunately seems to be missing. Wanamaker's own experience in running out of gas or needing repairs led him to believe that public service should be available for motorists. He told the men who were experimenting with engines for him that New York ought to have some place not only where cars could be left for the night, but where there would be a supply of gasoline and tires and a mechanic on hand for repairs. He put this idea into practice in a building on 58th Street, near Third Avenue, which we have been assured was the first public garage in New York, if not in the United States.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EXPANDING THE STEWART BUSINESS

COMMENTING upon the inclusion of Wanamaker in Harrison's Cabinet, an unfriendly critic declared that the Philadelphia merchant was a mediocre man who had had a succession of good breaks. "Everybody knows that luck and location make the successful merchant," he said. But Wanamaker thought—and taught—that the men who succeeded in life, in whatever career, were those who used the talents that God gave them and who kept everlastingly at it. As a young man, on week days in business, he tried to exemplify what he said on Sundays at Bethany. He was fond of repeating Daniel Webster's answer to the one who asked him what was the most important thought that ever entered his mind. "Individual responsibility"—that was the keynote of life! So Wanamaker was able to write:

To every man there comes a day when he must separate himself from others and act for himself alone. Cities and nations must be saved by individuals. Compound your common sense, conscience, and strength, and make them count.

We have seen how New York was a challenge to him. He bought a defunct business in a district from which retailing was moving, and at a most unsettled period. He resuscitated the A. T. Stewart business, in the face of keen competition, just before Christmas in a presidential year, when everybody was in a panic over the free-silver movement and when the country had not yet emerged from four years of a low-tariff régime. He went merrily into competition with other great New York stores at a Christmas

season. He announced simply the "undeviating mission of this House to be just itself."<sup>1</sup> In transferring to New York Wanamaker merchandise, "the best of the world's products," and in "keeping them ready for the people to examine at their leisure, any one the same as another," he was testing in new ground the old policy of the Philadelphia store. He expressed it this way:

The task of life we have set before us is not to make money the goal, but to serve interesting people in a business way, from a point of view different from the ordinary, that has in it the evolving principles and the observance of ethics of a professional character.

From the beginning there was no doubt of the success of the New York venture. A herculean effort was made and maintained by Robert C. Ogden and his associates to open and carry on a store to which New Yorkers would flock, despite its location and the absence of bargain sales and claptrap advertising. The response of New York was astounding. But it could not have been begun and it certainly would not have continued had not the master mind thrown himself unreservedly into the New York venture, dreaming and daring, as was his wont, and having a very good time doing it. In less than three years Wanamaker's had become a New York institution, and everybody was ready and willing to give the man whose name the business now bore credit for having accomplished the impossible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later he voiced the same thought in a store editorial: "The Store is just its plain self expressed in merchandise and deeds."

<sup>2</sup> In 1899 *Crerar's Cloak Journal* said: "The truth is that when Wanamaker came to New York City every merchant in town considered that the Philadelphian had bought 'a pig in the poke,' and all underestimated his ability to draw trade to the distant purlieus of Broadway and Ninth Street. It was admitted that Wanamaker had a beautiful store—but what was the use of a store without customers? But headway and standing were gained month by month until, with the fall and holiday seasons of 1899, business was as large as that of any dry-goods or department store in the city. When the store was open during the evenings, it was a strange sight to see the sidewalks between Ninth and Fourteenth Streets, usually so deserted, swarming with shoppers, all making their way to Wanamaker's."

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It had not seemed impossible to Wanamaker. That one could not do business in exactly the same way or with exactly the same stocks in the two cities, he knew before he started. He was no stranger to New York. We remember that he went over from Philadelphia to buy goods at Stewart's the day after he started in business for himself. For more than a decade he had done most of his own buying, and after that he visited New York frequently and studied the evolution of retail merchandising problems from the New York as well as from the Philadelphia point of view. He knew what he was about when he finally bought the Stewart business. He believed that if he regenerated it and operated it on the Wanamaker principles, with the benefit of thirty-five years of experience in storekeeping, his New York venture could not fail.

There were those who thought that no Philadelphian could do retail business in New York. There were others who said that it was folly to begin the experiment at an "out-of-the-way place like Ninth and Broadway." Rumor soon had it that the Wanamaker Store in New York was "on the rocks." But Wanamaker's correspondence and private papers from 1896 to 1899 reveal that he was a supremely happy man. The New York venture was meat and drink to him. As he himself put it, he "loved" to meet the problems of sudden increase in liabilities, in executive staff, in sales force, and in buying at home and abroad. Each stupendous task, each uncharted path, each seemingly insurmountable difficulty, was fun. During those three years he lived a hectic existence, amazing everybody by his energy and dexterity in the political campaigns in Pennsylvania, by his ubiquity in the two stores, and by his willingness to assume new responsibilities in connection with Bethany. Each activity, taken by itself, seemed to onlookers to be a heavy burden and a strain to be feared upon

the man who was passing into his sixties. But each seemed to refresh him for the others—and none more so than New York, where he was literally, as he wrote, “on my toes all the time.”

When he left for Europe in 1899 for a cruise to the Land of the Midnight Sun he was able to laugh at the Cassandras who had been predicting failure, and he did not take the trouble to deny the wild rumors of Wanamaker expansion to other cities. Trade journals and newspapers alike persisted in asserting that the striking success of the New York venture would soon make “Wanamaker’s” a national institution. After New York would come Chicago, Boston, Cleveland. Why not? As one newspaper editorial said:

That John Wanamaker is ambitious none will deny; and the ambition of his life, to be the greatest merchant in the world, can now be quickly satisfied. Success grows with a magic ratio. With the greatest stores in Philadelphia and New York bearing his name, Mr. Wanamaker might stride through the Union, planting thriving establishments in ten or twelve or twenty centers of population, and taking the public by storm! The picture is not overdrawn. In fact, it is well within the confines of probability. Why should not an institution like Wanamaker’s expand? The tendency in retail merchandising in the more populous localities is toward centralization.

But Wanamaker was not a promoter, and he had “no interest,” as he said, “in growing mushrooms.” His criterion of success was not what a man could do, but what a man could do well. Extending the sphere of his merchandising activities to New York had been possible solely because New York was only two hours from Philadelphia. His instinct warned him not to expand his business beyond the radius of his continuous and uninterrupted personal supervision.<sup>1</sup> It was really no temptation that he had to

<sup>1</sup> He never forgot his early experiences with branch clothing stores, where delegated authority, without frequent contact with the parent Oak Hall, proved unsatisfactory. See above, vol. i, p. 128.



THE NEW YORK STORE, SHOWING BOTH BUILDINGS



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resist when he was called upon to consider merchandising possibilities in other American cities.

The Philadelphia location was ideal. His problem there was to put upon the site he already owned a building that would enable him to remain indefinitely the greatest merchant in that city. In New York, on the other hand, he had to decide whether he was to stay where Stewart had founded the business or to move uptown as other general stores were doing. The old Stewart building, excellent as it was, soon proved too small for a general store in New York.<sup>1</sup> He had to have more room, or fall behind his growing competitors. The alternatives facing him were to buy up the adjoining block and erect a great building there, or to move his business.

The private files reveal the man's open-mindedness. It was neither stubbornness nor pride nor the desire to prove that New York would come to Wanamaker that made him stay where he was. He weighed the pros and cons, bringing all his talents to bear upon the problem, and while he was getting control of the block to the south of the Stewart building, he did not fail to provide for the contingency of moving, in case that should eventually prove necessary. He gave careful consideration to a number of other possible sites. Through brokers, he bought properties on Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh Streets, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and sought options on others. He considered the purchase of the Metropolitan Opera House and of the Tabernacle at Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street. He was fully informed of the successive steps that were being taken to assemble land for a Pennsylvania Railroad Terminal and

<sup>1</sup> Before he had been doing business in New York a year, Wanamaker began to consider the possibility of adding to the Stewart building. Speaking to the graduating class of Perkiomen Seminary on June 26, 1902, he said: "I have been for five years trying to find out how to put more stories on the building in New York, but I cannot do it."

for the Hotel Pennsylvania. As soon as he was sure of the location of the new station that was to serve both the Pennsylvania and the Long Island Railroads, he had his agents estimate the cost of buying up the west side of Seventh Avenue from Thirtieth to Thirty-first and from Thirty-third to Thirty-fourth. On the other side of Seventh Avenue he had under consideration the block through to Broadway from Thirty-sixth to Thirty-seventh, including the Hotel Marlborough. He had options on a Sixth Avenue frontage from Forty-third to Forty-fourth, on Madison Square Garden and on large parcels on Forty-second Street, including one of the Fifth Avenue corners. He considered the Perry Belmont property at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-seventh Street; and when a proposition was put before him to purchase Fifth Avenue frontage just below St. Patrick's Cathedral, he inquired whether the whole block could be assembled; and covered sheets with figures.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime he was buying up all the leases in the block between Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Eighth and Ninth Streets; and when he had most of these in his possession he entered into negotiations with the trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor for a long lease of the whole block and an extension of his leasehold of the Stewart building. The Germania Theatre and Nos. 42, 46, 48, and 50 Fourth Avenue he had purchased outright. The leases for the rest

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that no one man knew of all these transactions, knowledge of which the biographer has culled from correspondence and from conversations with brokers. Some, of course, were merely proposals, and the realtors may not have been in a position to make good their offers. In his negotiations with the trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor, Wanamaker had to confront them with tangible evidence of his intention to move if they did not prove reasonable. John N. Golding, who assembled the block south of the Stewart Building, was the broker for some of these tentative alternate locations. But as we find Wanamaker's dealings in New York real estate continuing after the decision to remain at Broadway and Ninth Street was made, it is evident that he was considering New York real estate for personal investment, as he had long and successfully done in Philadelphia.

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of the block were of varying length. The Broadway Trust Company, occupying the ground floor and basement at the corner of Eighth Street and Broadway, refused to surrender its lease, except at a figure that Wanamaker regarded as exorbitant. To protect himself in the future he also purchased the northwest corner of Fourth Avenue and Tenth Street, and got control of properties near by which could be used for warehouses and stables.

All this took three years of constant effort and vigilance. The transaction was not without its humorous side, for Wanamaker had to become for a time the owner of premises upon which liquor was sold, which distressed him greatly. And there were vexatious setbacks which more than once threatened to wreck the whole operation.

The Sailors' Snug Harbor tried to drive a hard bargain. They pointed out that the location was becoming more desirable because of the new subways on Fourth Avenue and Broadway, and the New Jersey tube station at Christopher and Ninth Streets. But Wanamaker countered that if he stayed where he was and put up a new building his decision would largely be influenced by not having to make too great an investment in leases. He told the trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor that "as the experience of five years in the uncertainty of the neighborhood has resulted in a diminution and not an increase of the retail stores, it is at least doubtful whether if these negotiations fail retail business can ever be revived in this locality." The Sailors' Snug Harbor had to choose between renewing the leaseholds at a reasonable figure and risking the removal of Wanamaker's and a consequent serious loss of revenue from their large holdings in the neighborhood. They knew that Wanamaker had been negotiating for other sites, and it was decidedly to their interest to save the neighborhood for retailing.

Wanamaker took up the negotiations with vigor when he returned from India, and let it be understood that a decision had to be reached soon. Just before Christmas, in 1902, the realty deal was announced, although the lease was not finally signed until April 20, 1903. It was a surprise for New York to learn that Wanamaker was going to stick it out below Fourteenth Street, supposedly now the deadline for retailing, and that a huge building, erected on the newly acquired block, would give Wanamaker's more floor space than any general store in New York. It was regarded as "a sporting decision," to quote the editorial comment of one of the New York newspapers. Very few there were who believed that Wanamaker would be able to remain a competitor with the stores that were moving uptown. "The old man is spunky," declared one who considered himself an authority on retailing in New York, "but he cannot buck the trend of the times. It's a pity he is investing so much money down there, because he will find it so much the harder to pull out later when he has to move."

John Wanamaker, however, was not "bucking the trend of the times," as he had figured it out. No greater mistake can be made than to assume that Wanamaker was not prevoyant. The lesser investment, and consequent lower annual overhead, than the same space in an uptown location would have entailed, was undoubtedly a factor in the decision. But it was by no means the principal factor. Wanamaker was always a student of conditions. Decisions that sometimes seemed to be made quickly and sweepingly were pretty generally the result of having thought the problem out in all its phases. Wanamaker once said that "the best way to avoid worrying about things is to use your head in mapping out your course—then you won't have to worry afterward."

There is no evidence that he ever regretted the decision

to expand the Stewart business on the site where he had acquired it. He had faith in New York's future and in his own merchandising methods. The problem of the years ahead, as he saw it, was not going to be to find customers, but rather additional space for the demands of the business that would increase steadily in volume every year.<sup>1</sup> We have gleaned from Wanamaker's correspondence, notes, speeches, and conversations with others, the grounds upon which he reached a decision unique in the annals of New York retail merchandising. To illustrate his uncanny foresight, as well as for the historical record, these considerations are worth mentioning. They have to do with what must always be the merchant's chief thought, the accessibility of his store to customers and conveniences offered them for doing their shopping.

Manhattan Island, narrow and water-bound, with little space for dwellings and with only a few main arteries cut by too frequent cross streets, seemed certain to become congested within the next generation, both as to inhabitants and to their means of getting around. People who did not like commuting would inevitably reclaim lower Fifth Avenue and the streets and squares below Fourteenth Street upon which wholesale business had not yet seriously encroached, erecting there large apartment houses, and keeping within walking distance of Wanamaker's a residential population, with large buying power, to whom his would be the most accessible general store. The overflow from Manhattan would continue to settle in Long Island, New Jersey, and Westchester. The Hudson tubes, the subways, and the

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker's assumption of a steadily increasing business in New York proved to be well founded, not only for his lifetime, but since. The growth has been uninterrupted. On December 17, 1925, the advertisement of the New York store announced that the thirtieth Christmas season was the largest in the Store's history. See the telegram to the Looking Forward Club of the New York store, May 1, 1908, quoted on pp. 133-4 below.

additional bridges over the East River afforded rapid transit to Manhattan. There was a Hudson tube station on Ninth Street, not far from Wanamaker's. The Fourth Avenue and the Broadway subways would pass on either side of his buildings, and discharge passengers in the basement of his new store. With rapid transit thus conveniently assured, and believing that Brooklyn, to which Wanamaker's would be the nearest Manhattan general store, was bound to become the largest center of population in New York, John Wanamaker did not see how he would go wrong by staying right where he was.

Looking forward to the congestion that was bound to come in the streets of New York, especially with the inevitable multiplication of motor transportation, it seemed to him a great advantage to have a whole block of Ninth Street flanked by his buildings, and to have them accessible for two blocks on Broadway and a block on Tenth and Eighth Streets. In addition, they faced the wide Astor Place, with its subway and elevated stations, for two blocks on the east.<sup>1</sup> "Downtown," therefore, was a term that held no terror for Wanamaker the merchant. He lived for twenty years after the great decision was made, and what happened in New York during those two decades gave him no cause to feel that he had been wrong.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Because of its unusual location, the Wanamaker store is the only general store in New York that is able to offer "parking space for everybody." The advertisement runs: "The eight facings of the two buildings on five streets give car accommodations unequaled in New York for shopping comfort. 200 cars can be accommodated at one time within 100 feet of Wanamaker's."

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of December, 1913, he wrote in the tea room of the New York store: "I have never yet seen such a crowd! The first floor looks like a football game, though I am only guessing, for I have never seen one except in a picture. Evidently the people of New York do not like to confess publicly that they are slow about anything, not even about preparing ahead for Christmas. I hear a choir singing out into the Rotunda from the third floor. The lads and lassies make good sounds. I do not like the eccentricity of it exactly, but thousands of mad shoppers stop a minute to listen and get the ruffles smoothed out of their temper."

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Before Wanamaker died greater New York had doubled in population. Underground trolleys replaced the old cable cars on Broadway in 1900, and the first subway brought New Yorkers to his stores in 1904. Between 1903 and 1914 the Williamsburg, Manhattan, and Queensboro Bridges opened up new thoroughfares to Long Island, one of them a few blocks from Wanamaker's. In 1910 the Hudson tubes subway was opened.

In another chapter we have shown Wanamaker, the builder, wrestling for nine years with the erection of the great store in Philadelphia. The new building in New York was planned and begun at the same time as the Philadelphia store, and the same great Chicago architect was employed. But the problem in New York was much easier. With the exception of the corner of Broadway and Eighth Street, where an existing lease could not be terminated, it was possible to raze the whole block and erect in a much shorter time a fourteen-story building which embodied ideas that Wanamaker had long had in mind. But in gallery form, with a well in the center, it was designed primarily for the display of furnishings for the home. Tunnels connected the basements of the two buildings, and a "bridge of progress" the upper floors. There was direct access in the basement to the Fourth Avenue Subway that had been completed recently. On the ground floor were men's specialty shops of the Burlington Arcade. The upper floors were devoted to furniture, draperies, floor coverings, china and glass, housefurnishings, musical instruments, with workrooms on the upper stories. The new building contained four special features—"The House Paltial," a private home built into the store, with its own halls and staircases, twenty-two rooms and a summer garden; a three story auditorium, seating thirteen hundred, with

organ, stage, and galleries; <sup>1</sup> a restaurant with accommodation for thousands; and a great dry air storage plant for furs.

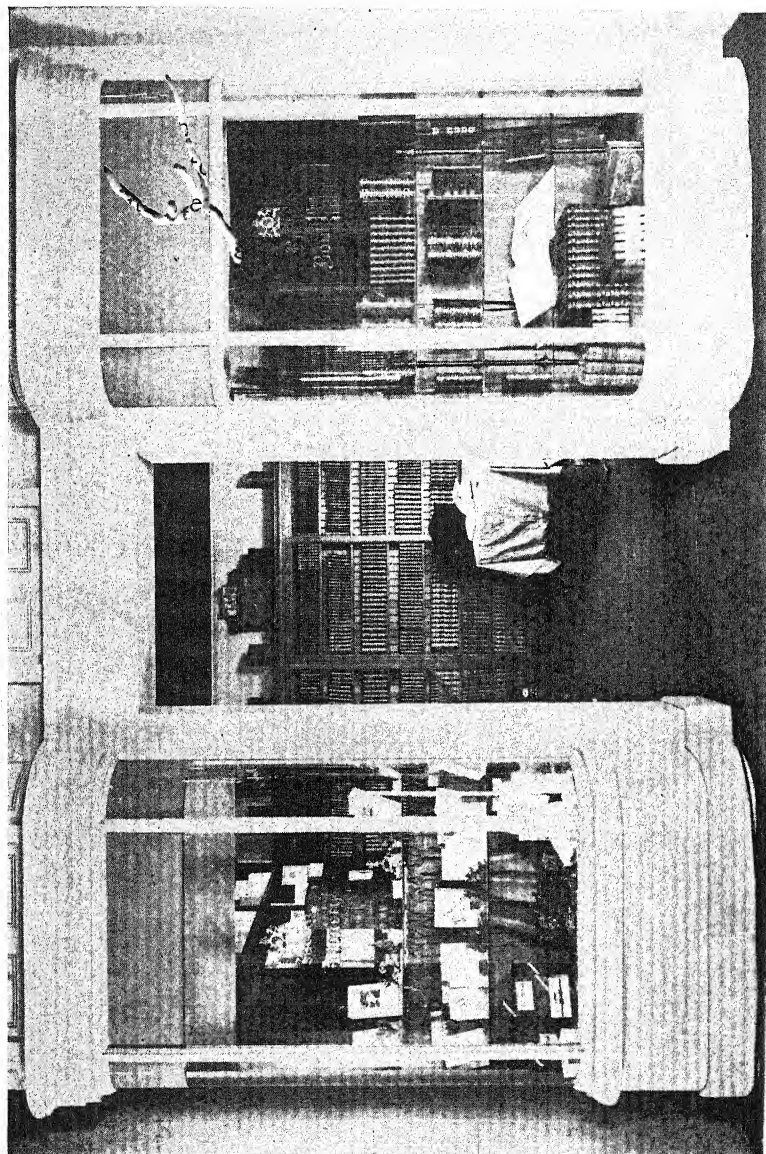
The new store was dedicated on September 24, 1907. Distinguished speakers had been invited, and features that had long been customary in celebrations in the Philadelphia store were planned to mark the opening. It is interesting to quote from Wanamaker's diary:

The New York ceremonies are very full of anxiety to me, and I have the banquet to preside over and speak at, besides a few words of welcome at the beginning. I am nervous as to how the New Yorkers will take our Philadelphia-isms.

This entry referred to the dinner to business and newspaper men, at which Secretary of the Treasury George B. Cortelyou was the guest of honor, and after which there was a celebration in the auditorium, and an inspection of the building.<sup>2</sup> A week later the new store was opened, and was visited by seventy thousand people on the first day. A newspaper account stated that "a band of more than one hundred pieces crashed into the martial strains of 'America'," while "six balconies up the people were massed, crowding and eager, and all singing." Much that was per-

<sup>1</sup> The fact that he allowed so much space for auditoriums in the plans for the new building in Philadelphia as well as in New York proves that concert and spectacles were not simply a device for drawing people to the store. The Philadelphia store was in the very heart of the retail business section of the city, and the same artists who appeared in New York under Wanamaker auspices appeared also in Philadelphia. The advertising value and drawing power of concerts and spectacles of various kinds were undoubtedly considerations in the mind of the merchant, but the thought that was uppermost was adding these entertainments to the service offered to the public. Many times the concerts were given in the evenings when nothing could be bought. Before the large auditoriums were opened music was already a great feature in the life of the stores. In 1906 Richard Strauss conducted his own famous music, and many other artists of the first order have since made their American debut in the Wanamaker stores.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, vol. i, pp. 289-298.



SPECIALTY SHOP—BURLINGTON ARCADE, NEW YORK STORE—1910, SHOWING THE SOCIAL STATIONERY AND BOOK SECTIONS

4

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haps not too extravagant was said and written.<sup>1</sup> The outstanding fact is that the new store tripled the selling space of Wanamaker's in New York, which now reached thirty-two acres.<sup>2</sup>

The completion of the new building not only enabled Wanamaker to keep pace with other general stores that had moved into new localities and had sweepingly increased their facilities, but it gave him "elbow room," as he put it, for employing to advantage the talents and for developing still further the ideas that had put him, in one decade, in the first place among New York merchants.<sup>3</sup> The volume of business had become too large for him to continue, within the confines of the Stewart building, to maintain the distinctiveness of the departments of his business. As we have seen, Wanamaker's conception of a general store was that of separate shops grouped under one management. That was his forte as a merchant. He had successfully resisted the tendency to make his establishment a great clearing house for an indiscriminate assortment of merchandise. Variety and quantity of goods never appealed to him, and he could not get up much enthusiasm over bargain lots. To his dying day his ambition as a merchant was to lead in quality and styles. This necessitated departments run as specialty shops. The new building in New York gave him the opportunity to separate his lines and display them to

<sup>1</sup> Comment on the new building was nation-wide and extended to Europe. We take from the cuttings the comment of the Russian weekly, *Neva*, of St. Petersburg: "The Wanamaker establishment excels the Parisian stores in its grandeur, its fifteen stories, and its remarkable arrangement. 'Au Bon Marché' and 'Louvre' are praised by E. Zola in his novel, *Au Bonheur des Dames*, but for singing the praises of the Wanamaker store there is no worthy living poet."

<sup>2</sup> In 1924 the demand for more space led to the elimination of the well in the center of the new building; and in 1925, when the lease at Eighth and Broadway expired, that corner was included in the new building, thus completing the solid block, and adding nearly six acres more.

<sup>3</sup> Hartley Davis in *Everybody's*, September, 1907, wrote that "the John Wanamaker store led in volume of business in New York in 1906."

advantage. The old Stewart building could now be used for women's wear and dry-goods. On the ground floor of the new building he put his men's shops. And he had ample space now for making every department of home furnishings a store in itself. Books and musical instruments, too, had their own place.

The private files bear eloquent witness to the ~~valuable~~ services rendered by Wanamaker's helpers, many of whom survive him and are still in the business. Both in Philadelphia and New York they prefer to remain anonymous. But in recording the expansion of the business in New York, the biographer feels that he ought to mention the work of William L. Nevin, friend of Thomas B. Wanamaker and his father. Mr. Nevin advised John Wanamaker in every step of the negotiations for acquiring the leases from tenants and from the Sailors' Snug Harbor. He attended to the legal side of the incorporation of the business, and he is still at this writing secretary and treasurer of the corporation under the son as he was under the father.

Wanamaker gloried in the fact that in New York, as in Philadelphia, the new buildings made possible expansion of the business without the loss of the personality of the founder that had always permeated it. The storm of a financial crisis was gathering and broke. But when he entered what was to prove the great struggle of his life he was conscious of having more to fight for than ever before.

## CHAPTER IX

### RIDING THE STORM

**A**MONG those who knew Wanamaker or who only knew of him through what he said and wrote and what others said and wrote about him, there were many detractors. They either refused to believe that Wanamaker practiced what he preached, or they tried to explain away his precept and example by saying, "Of course it's easy for a man in his position to talk that way and do those things." They forgot that Wanamaker started with nothing and made his way unaided to the front rank of Americans of his day; they were naïve enough to think that success and honors and great wealth relieved him from bearing burdens, solving problems, facing crises.

An old friend told Wanamaker in his youth: "Don't lose your grip. Noah was nearly 600 years old before he learned how to build the ark." Never did Wanamaker lose his grip, but when he saw other men unnerved he passed on to them this advice. In his store editorials he expressed in homely fashion his conviction that if the motive of a man's life was serving others, self-confidence and self-reliance would never be lacking. He said, too, that if the sense of individual responsibility was strong enough, every man had it in him to weather any crisis. But the self-made man had to remember that "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

When Wanamaker was establishing his business in New York and was in the midst of his fight against machine politics in Pennsylvania, he was passing from the fifties into

the sixties. A decade later, in the heyday of success, when he was coming to his seventies, he was called upon to ride the greatest storm of his life. It broke at a singularly unfortunate moment. Everything was against him. Illness had suddenly deprived him of the services of his son Thomas, who had been his right hand for years, and of Robert C. Ogden, the associate of a quarter of a century, who had been representing him in New York with consummate skill and energy since the Stewart business had been taken over. The financial panic that almost ruined the work of a lifetime came just after the new building in New York was opened and when he was pushing to completion the new building in Philadelphia. And he had greatly extended his obligations to buy stocks worthy of the new business home in New York.

In the early part of 1907 veteran traveling salesmen said that they had never had such a bonanza; everybody bought liberally. Surface conditions indicated that the good times would continue indefinitely. The report of the United States Treasury for 1906 revealed the largest amount of gold ever held, up to that time, by any government or institution in the world. But shortly after the beginning of the year the effect of the heavy liquidation of investments by fire-insurance companies to meet the claims of the San Francisco earthquake began to be felt. There had been unwise copper speculation. The Landis decision against the Standard Oil Company, the Hughes investigation of life-insurance scandals, and traction legislation in New York (it caused local street-railway stocks to shrink to one-fifth of their market value in a few weeks) strained the resources of the banks, which found themselves unable to supply the normal credit needs of the average business man.

The panic of the autumn of 1907 was the most disastrous

that the United States had experienced since 1873. There were many victims; but the man who everyone thought was bound to go under, because of the host of seemingly unsecured obligations standing against him, did not succumb. Day after day the failure of John Wanamaker was rumored. Some of those who were closest to him thought that he could not possibly survive; and Job's comforters hovered in the offing. Thirty years had passed since the 1877 crisis in Wanamaker's fortunes. Was it possible to believe that he could prove as indomitable a pilot at seventy as he had been at forty?

We are able to tell the story largely in Wanamaker's own words. He preserved the correspondence of these days in a special file, and put among his personal papers the daily sales reports of the two stores. He got relief from the tension by recording the happenings of each day. The lacunæ have been supplied by men who were close to him and upon whose memory the incidents of the greatest struggle of Wanamaker's life were indelibly impressed.

In Wanamaker's business there were storm signs many months ahead. He had boldly determined to finance the new buildings in both cities out of earnings and on his personal credit, and the commitments were greater than he had figured. He began to see that adverse business conditions were going to affect the rosy prospects for the year. As early as February 25, 1907, he wrote:

Very slowly indeed the wheels go round; at least it seems so to me when I am so impatient to go on. The nervousness in business is worse now than ever. A change has come. Much work has stopped, and people are not earning or making money. Everybody is halting, or, if moving, going at half speed.

At the end of the next month Ogden retired. He was seventy-one and physicians had told him that to continue in

active business would be to risk his life. Rodman Wanamaker succeeded him in the management of the New York store. The stores were incorporated, as New York and Pennsylvania corporations, in June, 1907, with all the capital stock in the hands of John Wanamaker.<sup>1</sup> None of the stock was put on the market. Wanamaker stuck to the idea of a personally owned business. In the early summer of 1907 he not only owed large sums in connection with the new buildings, but he had had to increase very materially his stocks in the New York store for the opening of the new building.<sup>2</sup> His commercial paper had been widely circulated. At the same time he had extensive real-estate investments in Philadelphia. Under normal conditions there would have been little or no cause for anxiety. The Wanamaker business had been growing by leaps and bounds, and the class of customers carried on the books made prompt payments. The assets were far ahead of the liabilities; and

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker explained the incorporation of the business in a letter to a friend on October 5, 1907, as follows: "Solely for the purpose of preventing any dissolution or lack of continuity of my business in case of death have I incorporated. I personally own and have all the shares in my possession except a small number in the names of officers. . . . The titles to real estate and leasehold in New York are held by the A. T. Stewart Realty Co., which leases the property to the corporation for a term of years, to provide against complications that might otherwise arise in settlement of my personal estate in event of death. I own and have in my possession all the shares of the A. T. Stewart Realty Co., save the few to qualify directors."

<sup>2</sup> In April, Thomas B. Wanamaker wrote from Philadelphia calling attention to the increase in stocks by nearly a million dollars since the previous year. John Wanamaker answered that he deplored the increases of stocks in both stores "in the present financial conditions, when we need to keep close to the shore; but it is impossible to forward our business with a fourteen-story building in addition to the old store and the enlargement of every department in each building without an increase of stock." He declared that it was "notably wrong to expect to do business" without the best of stocks; and called attention to the basement, "which requires practically a new stock of a lower grade of good goods—I refuse to build up a business with near rubbish. I think any expectation to forge ahead with these two great buildings without plenty of merchandise would be disastrous and disappointing." The son, his mind on financing, reiterated the warning. But the father, merchant always, was determined to offer New York "unrivaled stocks" for the autumn and Christmas season.

without an abnormal money stringency, it would have been easy to raise large sums quickly upon realty.

On September 18 John Wanamaker returned from Europe, just a week before the opening of the new building in New York. He was in high spirits, bubbling over with energy and enthusiasm, and eager in anticipation of the great things that were bound to follow the tripling of selling space in New York and the easier merchandising conditions in Philadelphia following the opening of a new section of the store there. He recorded:

Many changes have been made in the New York store's location of stocks, some of which were projected before I left. We are finally ready for the opportunities that will follow our opening. Business has been good, and everybody around here is cheerful, though financial people are blue, and prophesy that everything is going to the dogs. But we will wait and see if the dogs get so mad that they cannot be frightened off. We are full of our work. We have fire and fine plans. With lots of ideas, we see our way ahead with new programs, are wild for better merchandise, and are working hard on the stocks.

The next day, in Philadelphia, he added:

I hardly know where the day went. I spent much time in going over questions regarding the finishing of the last section of the building. It is a tremendous undertaking in these times. The congestion in the money centers seems to be greater than ever, owing to the investigation of metropolitan trolleys in N. Y., in which Dolan, Widener, Elkins, and Whitney seem to be so mixed up. The distrust created locks up money completely. Well, the end is somewhere near, and we can only furl the topsails and wait.

A few days later storm signals were noticed:

Each day has rifts in the clouds for me, but the outlook for our accustomed large sales is rather dubious with such a general fright and hoarding of money. I fear the spenders will spend less than usual and that the higher-cost goods will be much neglected. There are many new complications such as the banks refusing to take on deposit cheques (that are good) on out-of-town places, saying that they have no way to

get settlements from other banks. Therefore they receive them only "for collection," and this does not permit drawing against them until the banks get the return in a week or so. This terrifies and cripples New Yorkers. . . . There goes the bugle. Now the buyers will come with the sales for an almost sunless day. All signs through the house were good. The week has been a long one and I am glad for the Sunday that cuts the strain.

Two days later he wrote:

The tightness of money is concerning me and the long stringency makes us lose on discounts and gives chance for criticism of which there is not a little. I have retired about 2 millions of dollars in paper and with the 13 millions paid on our buildings I am poor enough. Still I see daylight ahead, but it makes my days longer and my cares greater.

*the tightness of money is  
concerning me + the long stringency  
makes us lose some discounts + gives  
chance for criticism of which there is  
not a little. I have retired about  
three millions of dollars in paper +  
with the 13 millions paid to build  
our buildings you may believe  
that I am poor enough.*

*Still I see the daylight ahead  
but it makes my days longer +  
my cares greater -  
American finances are not in a good way.*

Despite the inability to meet payments in time to take advantage of discounts and the slow settlement of August and September charge accounts, Wanamaker remained optimistic. For him there were always "rifts in the clouds" and he always saw "daylight ahead." But in Philadelphia on October 21 he recorded that "the failure of the great N. Y. new and popular Trust Co." had "brought a heavy storm of nervousness and fear, which will be a world-wide wet blanket." And on October 23, while seated at lunch in the restaurant on the ninth floor of the new building in New York, he put down:

Our business in both stores is going ahead of last year's sales, but I do not see how we can expect people to buy as much under existing conditions. Looking out of these high windows, there is a haze over the city and the distant hills beyond the river, but it is not nearly so bad as the haze over the financial affairs of the city. As I drove up here, I saw a long line of depositors on the sidewalk making their way to the doors of the Trust Company of America, still continuing the run. Three or four other banks did not open their doors this morning.

There is a scare everywhere. People are drawing out their balances just from fear that banks will close and shut them off from the use of their money. This precipitates trouble, for the banks have not sufficient currency to stand the runs. The Lincoln Trust is having trouble to-day, and no one knows where the fire may suddenly break out.

On October 24 Wanamaker wrote that he saw "the way ahead pretty plainly" and that he would be "altogether cheerful" were it not for the fact that:

T. B. W. is so far from well that it distresses me to see him. He has just come back from Mt. Clemens, but he is very miserable. R. W. is a stalwart of the first rank and drives right ahead in spite of no holiday. He is bright and full of inspirations. We two are the whole team—and we do a lot of pulling for a two-horse team.

On the evening of October 26 Wanamaker attended a dinner to Postmaster-General Meyer in Philadelphia, and made a great speech on postal matters. Most of the men

present had heard that he was about to crash, and many of them believed it. They marveled at his cheerfulness and buoyancy, and wondered if there had been a mistake in their information. Although he knew what they were thinking and that they considered him an inevitable victim of the panic, if it was not quickly checked, Wanamaker did not hesitate to broach the subject of the financial crisis. He declared that the postal-savings scheme he had long advocated might have prevented what the country was suffering. But the diary entries prove that he was not acting a rôle. He was not unduly worried, except for the health of his son Thomas, and he did not for one instant entertain the thought of failure. This is shown by what he wrote on October 28:

It certainly does take more nerve force to live in these times that may never come in the life of those who live in the next one hundred years. But, "as thy days so shall thy strength be," and I go on in strong faith, always coming nearer to the full daylight if it be only step by step.

*It certainly does take more  
nerve force to live in these  
times that may never come  
in the life times of those who  
live in the next one hundred  
years - But - "As thy days so  
shall thy strength be" and I  
go on in strong faith always  
coming nearer to full daylight  
if it be only step by step -  
Our people laid home on the  
31st Oct on America.*

And in a letter to a friend on the same day he said:

Possibly you hear more of the yarns going around about our business than I, and it must be a satisfaction to you to find that not one of all the fabrications thus far has turned out true—NOT ONE! That we are not taking all the discounts that we have been accustomed to take, not paying everything in the shortest time, is true, but this is unfortunately rather too common in the present financial conditions. I have done nothing since I came home but pay out money and am as poor as Job's turkey. If I could not see my way ahead I would be forlorn indeed.

There is a conspiracy of misrepresentation that we could charge as libelous were we to undertake to punish the offenders, but what's the use? Everything is now better, just from the standing over it that I have done. I can see my way out well enough, but I must never again run the risks of this past year of sickness and absences and semi-panic in the financial world that is so stringent to-day that the banks could get 12 pr. ct. for money in any amount if they had it to put out.

This means, all things considered, that I cannot go on and finish the last big section of the new Phila. building and risk monetary conditions. Neither am I willing to disturb the merchandise end of the business to build the store. Yet the truth is that we can never settle down to do our best work until we have finished building the block. If I defer the work, I may not live to see it all done. I am moved to swallow my pride and take a mortgage always in reach and go ahead.

On October 29, however, the situation had grown much more critical. Wanamaker realized that he was believed to be insolvent in New York. Directly and indirectly pressure was put upon him. He was fair-minded in recognizing that many who sought payment from him did it because they were as hard pressed as he was, and not because they had lost faith in him. But there were others who said frankly that they wanted their money before the crash came. On the other hand, friends rose up around him. He never forgot the messages of these friends. A representative of the *New York Herald* came with a cable from Paris. James Gordon Bennett had directed him to tell John Wanamaker that "he did not believe the rumors and wanted the *Herald*

to do anything we liked." Bankers remembered that Wanamaker had never asked for a discount in twenty years; "they are going the limit to help me," he wrote. A large personal loan was offered by one banker, concerning which Wanamaker commented: "I know he cannot afford to do this." Among the letters of October 29 we quote one as an example of the insults to which the veteran merchant was subjected. A real estate firm wrote:

We take the liberty of inquiring if there is any possibility of your old building on Broadway coming in the market in the near future, as we have a client who wishes to lease about 300,000 sq. feet gross, and for which he is willing to pay \$120,000.

On October 30 Wanamaker recorded:

Many people think the world is coming to an end so far as money and business are concerned. The financial flurries are now serious. A kind of crazy wave seems to be sweeping up and down New York like an angry sea, and oozes out in drops and drips and streams over the whole country. I never believed that it was possible for Americans to have such fever-and-ague business attacks! There have been no runs on banks and trust companies in Philadelphia, but everybody is shivering with fear as if it were the coldest day in January and they had on linen or alpaca suits. The alarmed people are everywhere drawing in their money and hoarding it and stopping off their store buying. In New York the runs are still continuing on banks and trust companies, despite the fact that they have steadily paid depositors every day and the greater fact that Mr. Morgan and others are in the breach, helping the institutions they are interested in. . . . Our two big boats are sailing smoothly and I am comfortable, but not so far along as expected.

On November 1 Wanamaker published in the store advertisement, over his signature:

Our October sales in Philadelphia, ending last night, showed a handsome increase over the October of 1906. In New York we had an increase in sales this October that doubled the increase in Philadelphia. A caller said to the writer yesterday, "Be sure your ads will find you

out." We are satisfied to be judged by our advertisements and by our merchandise.

On November 2 the diary tells of more failures among banks and manufacturers, and gives details of pressure for collection and of people clamoring for an interview with him. But he adds:

The streets look like a greasy black blanket and naturally everything is slowing up. Still the shade as well as the light must have a place in the picture. I am well and strong and cheerful, and this is good and helpful. There are brighter days, I know, folded up in the future.

On November 6 he wrote:

As yet none can tell what is going to happen, with banks and trust companies still in peril after two weeks' runs. To-day the great Arnold Print Works of North Adams, Mass., failed, and this old concern of all rich people was pushed to the wall in New England just because they could not borrow even on good securities. I feel so sorry for them and wish I could help them. I am blessed in being able to plow ahead toward the safe land in sight in this very rough weather.

The next day, November 7, did not turn out to be another Black Friday, as had been predicted. We find Wanamaker in New York, waiting for the day's sales, and writing:

Friday this is, dull and gray again and rain betimes, all unfavorable for people to be out. But the man who whistles on a rainy day is in his element when things are difficult enough to wake him up. It seems queer for me to talk like this when the times are near to the supernatural and when for weeks great men's hearts have been quaking with fear and many men's fortunes have turned out to be gilded nothingness. The truth is that there is but one, the Holy One Himself, who can still this storm and calm the tumultuous waters. I am learning to pray and am looking to the Father above for light and help, not altogether for the business, but to give me health and wisdom and to make me able to cope with circumstances as they arise.

I just what the  
 1662 next few days  
 will reveal it  
 is hard to say.  
 I am just going  
 on day after day  
 with a heart  
 strong in the belief  
 that the Mercantile  
 Father has me  
 in His keeping  
 & will guide me  
 & do for me  
 1663 what is best

During the next fortnight the panic was at its height. The apprehension reigning in New York and New England spread to Philadelphia. In both stores sales fell off. It was the same with other general stores. Because of the great outlay for additional stocks in New York, the enormous obligations on the new buildings in both cities, and, above all, the fact that Wanamaker's was a personally owned business, his name had to bear the heaviest credit load. And yet, even when advised to put out more commercial paper at a high rate of interest, as the alternative to failure, Wanamaker refused. He told his financial people that he was "not going to have his name go begging

on paper." He preferred to trust in the loyalty and good sense of his large creditors and in the ability of the banks to see him through. Although day after day he faced insolvency, he remained cheerful and hopeful. He thanked God for his good health, for his ability to remain "in the saddle," and he wrote that "it is real fun to have all the details of this business in my hands again—everything passes through me, and I am attentive to matters of routine that I have not thought about for fifteen years." He likened himself to a captain piloting a ship, and declared that there was "new strength and inspiration" in riding every wave. "The waves are breaking hard, but they do not engulf me." He obeyed the old hymn and counted his blessings. These, and not his appalling difficulties, he dwelt upon, taking joy in "commanding two ships whose crews are all that a captain could ask for." He entered upon the day's work as "going out to battle, with a musket on my shoulder." He did not know what the morrow would bring forth, but, "Mother was in to-day," and that gave him joy and comfort. He refused to join in "the hysterical advertising elsewhere. We have concluded to go along in our unsensational way and not do any crazy-quilt pages."

On November 13 he wrote:

The most serious of the hard times is just here and it is difficult to forecast the future. The luxuries are not selling—silks, pianos, jewelry, and the sales in N. Y. are heavily less all the month and now we are falling off here. Merchants and manufacturers are all dreadfully poor and cannot turn round, as stock gamblers, and cliques in New York have all the money. . . . This is not a pessimistic spell upon me, but a deep conviction forced upon me after a week of digging into facts that are cropping out all over the country showing its poverty and needs. But I feel right well and equal to a lot of work, though I can't keep up to R. W.'s steam engine.

And on November 19:

This Tuesday is another new day of fighting and conquest. I have been all over the place reviewing the troops and we are in battle order. The Christmas time percentages began yesterday as a new boon and possible incentive to greater efforts. Having not so many spenders and selling lower priced goods we must strive more to please all who come. . . . But for God's grace I should have been submerged by the unforeseen circumstances. Before the end of the month we shall have emerged from the heavy part of our load. December promises almost entire relief. It has all come around by own own labor and adjustments and without any financial help of any sort outside of ourselves—practically the work of R. and myself, humanly speaking, and by the great goodness and help of our Heavenly Father who has given us wisdom and strength

if so

all come around by our own labor  
+ adjustments + without any financial  
help of any sort outside of our  
own selves—practically the work  
of R. + myself, humanly speaking  
+ by the great goodness + help  
of our Heavenly Father who has  
given us wisdom + strength in  
body mind + heart, to do the  
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us the path we ~~are~~ have walked  
in by His clearing the obstacles  
in the road.

in body, mind, and heart, to do the best things and to make for us the path we have walked in by His clearing the obstacles in the road.

During the critical weeks of November setbacks came unexpectedly several times, despite Wanamaker's optimism. Firms with whom he had been doing business for a generation, and upon whom he had counted, would sometimes demand a settlement. He was at his wits' end, and there were days when he confessed to himself that he was being pushed to the wall.

But once, when he was put to the test, he would not admit himself beaten, although a way out was offered him. Thinking that they could tempt him to give up the fight, a certain group made him an offer which seemed to them to be decidedly to his advantage, under the circumstances. They announced their willingness to buy him out, giving him a price to be set by impartial appraisers for his buildings and stocks, and \$10,000,000 in addition for the name and good will of John Wanamaker. Acceptance of this offer would have enabled him to emerge from a panic a rich man; on the other hand, its refusal, it was intimated to him, might mean that his fortune would be swept away. Wanamaker refused even to discuss it.<sup>1</sup> Adverse circumstances might compel him to part with his buildings and their stocks, but his name was not for sale.

Wanamaker owed more than he knew at the time to men whose faith in him persisted throughout the crisis. The board of the United States Steel Corporation, for example,

<sup>1</sup> In recounting this incident, Wanamaker said that he had in mind also—as he had had throughout the panic days—the fortunes of his 13,000 employees and their families. "But I did not mention it to those men, for they would not have understood the point of honor involved. If I had told them that the captain could not abandon the ship to save himself, they would have thought I was a crazy old fool. They did, anyway. I could not have quoted to them what the Proverbs say about the value of a good name."

carried over his large account to 1908.<sup>1</sup> Other creditors rejected the suggestions made to them to take action that would result in a receivership. Wanamaker's paper was widely and energetically protected by those who, for various reasons, did not want to see him go under. These factors in his glorious and successful fight, however, do not detract from the vital importance of the man's own rôle. All that Wanamaker had been and had done in the past would not have saved him. The fact that his assets were far greater than liabilities would not have saved him. Financial panics strike at the highest, and none is too solidly rooted to depend upon past performance as protection against the storm. Wanamaker rode the storm because he was on the bridge of the ship.<sup>2</sup> What he was in the autumn of 1907, and not what he had been before, brought him safely through. Had he lost his grip for a single hour, had he wavered or hesitated, he would have gone down. His faith in himself, his buoyancy, his unconcern, his fighting spirit, his sense of individual responsibility, combined to enable him to ride the storm. He could not fail, because, as he wrote, "I am going on day after day with a heart strong

<sup>1</sup> Judge Gary told the biographer that when the Wanamaker account came up—it was a large one for structural steel—and a member moved that it be carried over to February, there was no discussion, no dissent. All the Board had confidence in John Wanamaker, and were glad to do what they could to help him. Not only did they carry him over, but later granted him the same favorable terms for the rest of the steel for the Philadelphia building that they had quoted him for the first section, when the market price was lower.

<sup>2</sup> One close to Mr. Wanamaker, after reading this chapter in manuscript, wrote to the biographer: "Those 1907 days were something to remember, when even the stock ticker went so far as to report that Wanamaker's had failed. With pressure upon him that would have killed half a dozen men, I never once saw Mr. Wanamaker lose his nerve; nor do I believe he lost an hour's sleep. His method was to give each individual matter that came before him his full and undivided attention, and when disposed of for the time being, to go on to the next, without flurry or worry. Although Mr. Wanamaker believed that there was a conspiracy to drive him to the wall, he did not permit it to sour his life or dampen his enthusiasm for things that lay ahead of him."

in the belief that the Heavenly Father has me in His keeping and will guide me and do for me what is best."

This deep religious faith is revealed almost every day in the diary; and it is significant that he always spoke of being "so very well." He was "seldom tired," and physical well-being gave him a "hopeful spirit still about the future."

On December 4, he wrote:

I am counting off the days one by one as we travel to the land of deliverance. In a fortnight more we shall be almost through the thickets. I believe January will see me quite out into the open again and with blue skies—to stay, practically, so far as my human knowledge and power can forecast. I am so thankful for this Cape of Good Hope close at hand.

But there were still "rough seas to travel," requiring "skill and faith—I don't know which is more needed." In the first fortnight of December the Philadelphia business decreased over \$150,000, and New York over \$170,000. This was in the face of the greatly increased selling space, involving larger overhead. Wanamaker wrote:

It is a new experience for us to have so much of our excellent advertising and the best of it fall dead both in N. Y. and Phila. Some classes of goods, such as dresses, china, silks, pianos, jewelry, no attention is paid to at all. But I think there is a little let-up in the squall. The feeling is general that the worst is known and that in a week or ten days the banks will pay specie and notes again. It will take a good while though for the people to get over the scare and spend money freely once more. The November days were hard and heavy for me but they are now safely and successfully past.

On December 16 business was still slow:

All things are moving right along as I wish, yet not quite as fast as they would were it possible to keep up our sales. N. Y. and Phila. are both selling as many pieces but all of so much less value that the amounts are less and this gives me less money—but it is all doing so well

that I am full of comforts and thankfulnesses. I am not letting a single thing fret me. Out of it all I shall have experiences and lessons never to be lost. We shall be better merchants all of us for the vanished sentiments that we supposed were existing from forty years of business connections.

Three days later Wanamaker felt that times were not improving:

More and more people are out of work and many large employers are cutting down. The uncertainty of the future is the sole cause and this is engendered by the banks not being of any use to the manufacturers. The financial world is in a great mess and no one can see far into the future, whether a  $2/3$  or  $3/4$  business should be provided for. Our sales are steadily falling off in spite of tremendous efforts, but I am quite clear that we are suffering less than others. The people seem to feel that they are sick and cannot have any Christmas or that Santa Claus has broken his leg and cannot get about as of old. People's spirits and the business have to be pumped up day and night.

January and February entries indicate that the aftermath of the panic was so severe that only constant vigilance would prevent the indefinite continuance of serious financial embarrassment in the mercantile business. But Wanamaker remained cheerful and hopeful:

There is much unrest everywhere. Rates of money are lower, but the railroads want the first call, and their needs are said to be from 400 to 600 millions at once. This will make congested conditions for general business for a long time. As to ourselves, we are making good progress steadily toward the winning post, and shaping everything not to be caught again like the 5 foolish virgins. It is a hard lesson to have to learn, but discipline is sometimes needful. I am sure I shall be the better for learning to depend on myself, humanly speaking, rather than on the financial systems of our country that now operate by the might and money power of a few men.

I am cheerfully, yes, hopefully, living a day at a time, and all the time seeing things clear up. We are still in a hard and difficult place, but all things are overcomable, and so I go on with patience, well assured of the desired outcome. The panic may come again sometime, just as it

did last year, but we shall take care not to be subject to such a pressure.

I am so busy trying to reshape the N. Y. store that I found lying in the trough of the sea. The business that came was upon the Philadelphia reputation and much that we got left us because we were not found worthy.

When asked to express in one sentence the *sine qua non* of success Wanamaker answered, "Being one's own most merciless critic." His diaries show that he did not spare himself—or others—when he was going through the deep waters of the autumn and winter of the great panic. His own shortcomings as a financier he analyzed with remarkable acuteness; and he did not attempt to justify himself—although at times he let his pride as a merchant explain getting in too deeply in stocks. He had always gone on the principle that Wanamaker's should be in a position to offer customers the best of everything and plenty of it. He scored himself, too, for having let pride stand in the way of comparatively easy financing of the new buildings, which would have avoided the crisis, by mortgage bonds; and he recognized that he had been unwise in tying up his own money in too ambitious realty undertakings. During all the panic period he had the strange experience of being worth millions, and yet finding himself unable to get money out of the banks or on government bonds.<sup>1</sup> He had built and equipped the new buildings in New York and Philadelphia without a mortgage or a mechanics' lien. He had no mortgages against the New York buildings, and only a little over a million dollars on the Chestnut Street frontage in Philadelphia, "part of which was original purchase mortgages, carried largely because we had 4-per-cent

<sup>1</sup> Speaking at the Fidelity Life Convention on September 10, 1913, John Wanamaker said that life insurance was the best sort of savings bank, and to illustrate he declared, "Some of my policies were so written that when you could not get any money out of the banks or on government bonds in the panic of 1907, the insurance companies loaned money on them." See below, p. 233; and also vol. i, p. 346.

money." No merchant in the United States held individually such assets—and yet Wanamaker had allowed himself to get into a ticklish situation. He paid for it; and he learned the lesson.

That he kept his head every day and all day long, and that there was never a time when his buoyancy and equanimity left him, we know from the record. He wasted no time in reproaching himself or scolding his associates, but devoted all his energies to getting out of the hole. And after it was all over there were no post-mortems. Everybody had made mistakes, including himself; but they had pulled through gloriously. The unforgivable sin, in Wanamaker's eyes, was disloyalty. In all the months of acute nervous tension there was no anger expressed over things left undone or poor judgment. The only sharp note comes in recording defection and disloyalty and outspoken lack of faith on the part of men with whom he had been doing business and others whom he had always considered as his friends. There was only one kind of friendship for Wanamaker, only one kind of relation with associates and employees—sticking together through thick and thin. But the experience did not embitter him, although he was wounded and disappointed. "Why should I consider it a terrible experience?" he wrote afterward to a friend. "It was a great lesson—and then, blessed discovery, 'most everybody stuck by me."

The unsettled conditions following the panic did not disappear with the spring and summer of 1908. On July 6 we find this entry:

It is noonday and I have no desire to eat what is set before me except the cantaloupe and the iced tea. The dullness of the days for sales is something never experienced in our business hitherto and it is very hard to get used to diminishing figures. Were it other than temporary there would be at least one blue man around. I have had the number of

schedules of sales for June 1907 and 1908 taken off by Depts. And there is a vast difference in the comparisons. But the total of the schedules appears to be about the same in spite of the lessened values, showing that the people came and spent what they could.

Wanamaker was level-headed, as usual, and looking for "the rift in the clouds," when he kept in mind the number of sales and did not go by value alone. He realized that money was tight and that most people simply could not buy high-priced goods. As long as there was no falling off in the number of sales, he could feel that his stores were holding their own. But it was a hard cross to bear, that the first year in which the new sections of the Philadelphia building were open and in which he had the use of the fine new building in New York, should prove to be a year of falling off—for the first time in his long business career. And there had been no respite for him after the grilling experiences of the previous winter. Ogden was gone. Thomas B. Wanamaker had died. The elder Wanamaker, puzzled by the unprecedentedly long period of depression and pessimism in New York, had to give more and more time to business problems there.<sup>1</sup> Single-handed and an outsider, he kept sounding the note of confidence in New York business circles. In his advertisements, in interviews, and in speeches, he protested against the atmosphere of demoralization that pervaded New York business circles.

It was when the Wanamaker business had hardly emerged from the crisis, and his own people were still apprehensive and disheartened, that he sent a ringing telegram to the Looking Forward Club of his New York store:

May I say in dead earnest, and in love for my country, that I believe in the future prosperity of the business in New York, where so many

<sup>1</sup> From the diary: "R. cannot spread himself over two places with advantage; Philadelphia cannot spare him and there is no one in sight in Philadelphia to take his place. With T. B. W. and R. C. O. gone, my duty to New York is compelling."

setbacks have been given to it during the past year, speaking from my outlook in the pilot's little cabin. The only thing to do is to turn squarely about the steering wheel of all such as desire to avoid the shoals that have wrecked others, and keep to the narrow but deep and safe channel of the clear waters, where we have always found good sailing.<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker was in his seventy-first year when the Christmas season of 1908 failed to bring the return to normal conditions that he had so ardently hoped for and heralded. But he expressed in deeds his faith in the future. Again the master of ample funds, he placed large orders for the New York store, which helped out many a manufacturer and wholesaler; and he went ahead with the remainder of the Philadelphia building. The long-delayed reward came in 1909, when business "picked up" again, and began a new curve upward that lasted as long as he lived. Never again were there rumors of his failure. The completion of the Philadelphia building was successfully financed; commercial paper was gradually retired; and the Wanamaker stores flourished.

But there was one loss that came while Wanamaker was riding the storm from which he never recovered. In the most critical days of November, 1907, Thomas B. Wanamaker lay desperately ill in an apartment that he had furnished to be near his newspaper in his *North American* building. The diary references are frequent, and full of anguish. The doctors told John Wanamaker that his son would never be able to work again and that he would have to retire from the firm, as Ogden had done. Thomas B. Wanamaker went to Egypt, and returned to Paris at the end of February, where he died on March 2, 1908, at the age of forty-seven. We refrain from quotations, which would show how this anxiety through the critical months, and then the bereavement, added to the burdens of the

<sup>1</sup> Sent from the Philadelphia store on May 1, 1908.

man who was making the great fight of his life. It is all too personal and does not belong to the world.

Wanamaker did not relax or go away for a vacation. He wrote that he felt the responsibility of his "captaincy of the business" all the more, now that his son was gone. And because of his great grief he was glad that there were critical problems that had to be faced and solved. Shortly after Thomas's death, he wrote:

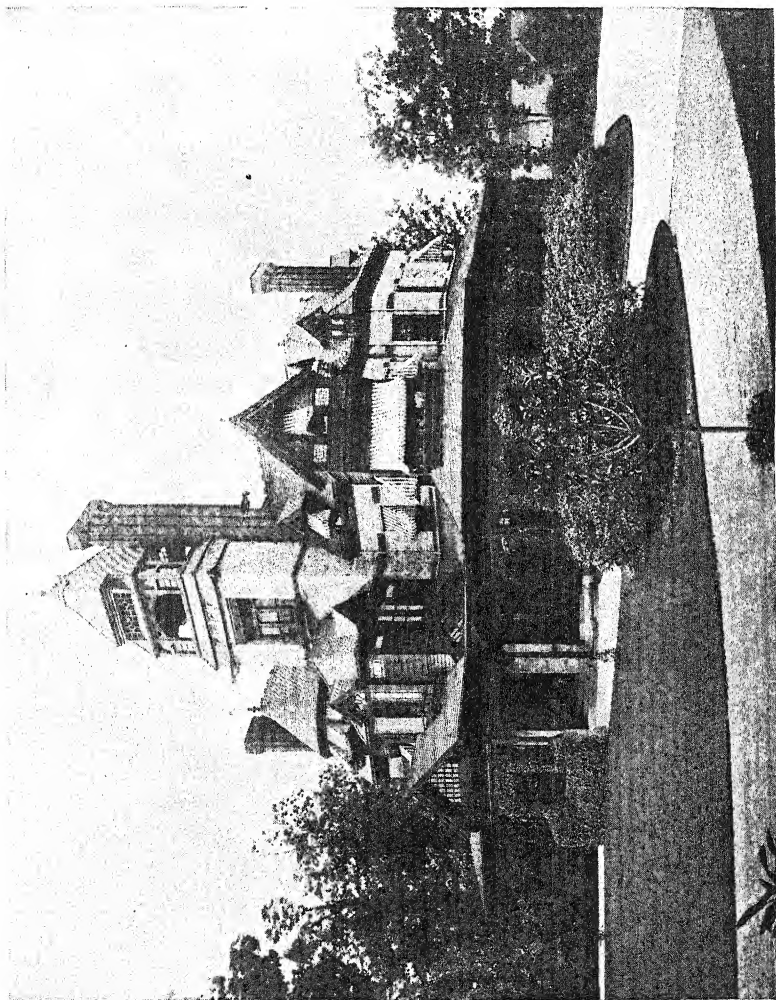
The sense of being useful, the feeling that I am needed, makes me glad to live and work—and I think that is why I am still effective, at least I hope I am. The uncolored truth about my health is that it is perfect. I am so happy to be ready for each new day with a full stock of vigor, courage, confidence and hope. How rapidly the changes of life come and how well to strive for a faith built upon the Rock of Ages.

## CHAPTER X

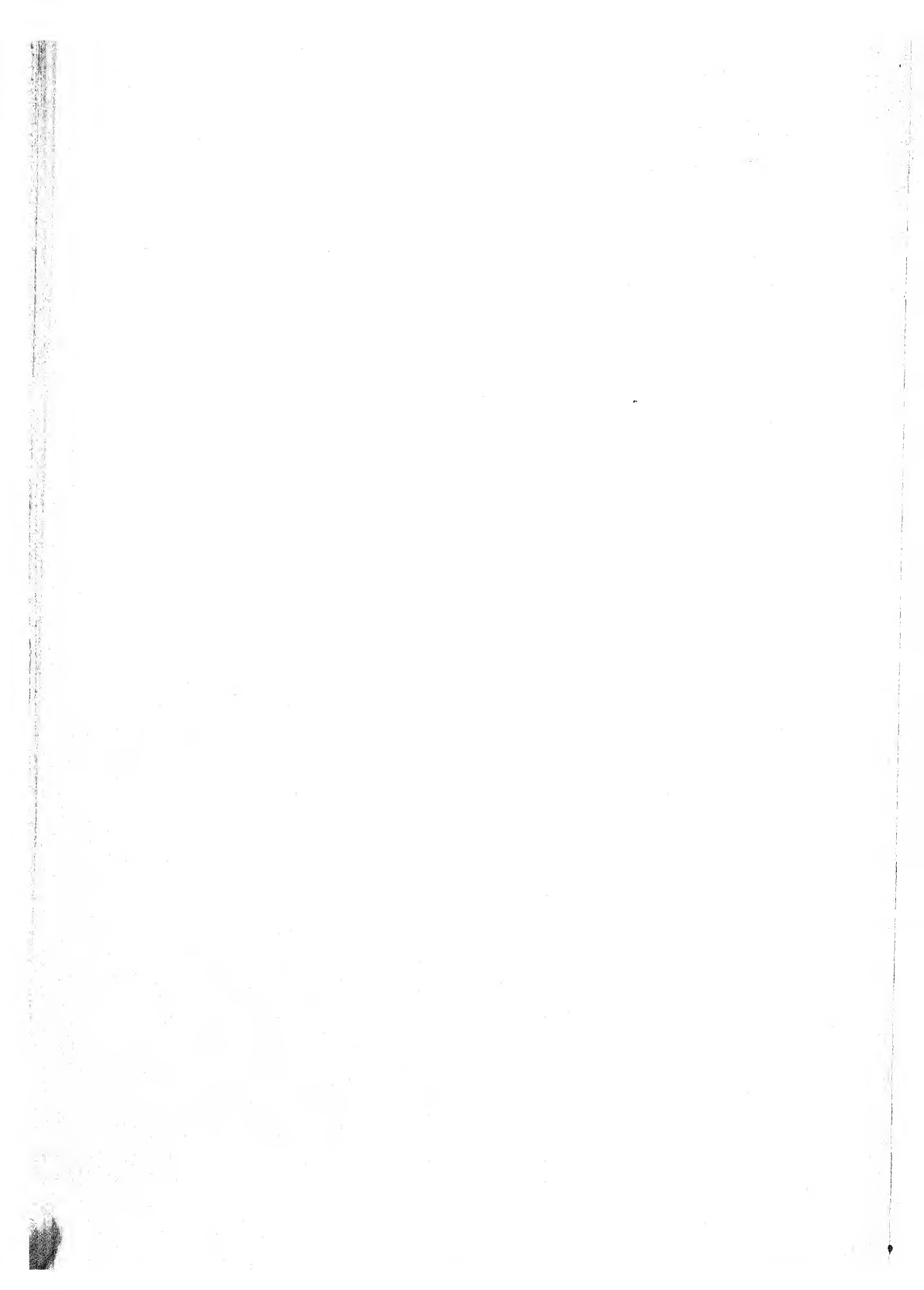
### LINDENHURST

OF how the Wanamakers bought a house at Cheltenham Hills in 1868 and of the development of the country home of the thirty-year-old merchant during the succeeding twenty years into Lindenhurst, an estate of a hundred acres, we have already written. The new home, completed in 1884, was built of gray stone quarried on the grounds, and its outstanding feature was the space devoted to wide porches surrounding the building. As at Cape May Point, the Wanamakers sacrificed the outward appearance of their house, to a certain extent, to out-of-doors facilities. They both loved rocking-chairs and a view, and they did not allow architects to deny them this. What the house lacked, however, was more than compensated for in the beauty of the grounds. Well up on the side of the hill whose slope was all lawn, Lindenhurst was strikingly mirrored in an artificial lake.

During the years in Washington, Lindenhurst saw pretty nearly as much of its master and mistress as in previous years. For their summers were not spent abroad, and in the spring and autumn there were week-ends not devoted wholly to Bethany. In 1891 Wanamaker wrote to a friend that he had never quite appreciated all that he had actually—and potentially—at Lindenhurst until he had gone to Washington to live. The same enthusiasm followed the long trips abroad of the 1890's and the 1900's. Getting home was not going to the town house on Walnut Street, but being able to unpack one's things and dig oneself in at



THE NEW HOME "LINDENHURST," BUILT IN 1884



Lindenhurst. The expressions are Wanamaker's. That is how he felt.

When he was abroad and the desire to buy many things took possession of him, he was constantly thinking of Lindenhurst. It was the same with Mrs. Wanamaker. Fountains and benches from Italy; rock shrubs from Switzerland; fallow deer from Hagenback's in Hamburg; red tiles from Marseilles; tapestries and pictures from Paris; house and table linen from Belfast—John Wanamaker and his wife, now old enough for their children to smile at them for what they did and how they thought, consigned an amazing variety of purchases like these to Lindenhurst.

During the 1890's saddle horses for the older folks began to give ways to hackneys, and croquet on the lawn became more popular than tennis. Mrs. Wanamaker multiplied the greenhouses, where she could have constant new interests and exercise without too great effort; and her husband went in for registered cows and a model dairy.

As they grew older Wanamaker remained markedly more active than his wife. At Lindenhurst, as elsewhere, he was restless and liked to keep on the go. Organized sports bored him. He had little interest in trying to become proficient in games that required constant practice.<sup>1</sup> But he would walk long miles all over the country. He did not mind climbing. He stoutly maintained that he could stand cold and wet as well as the next man, and kept paying—

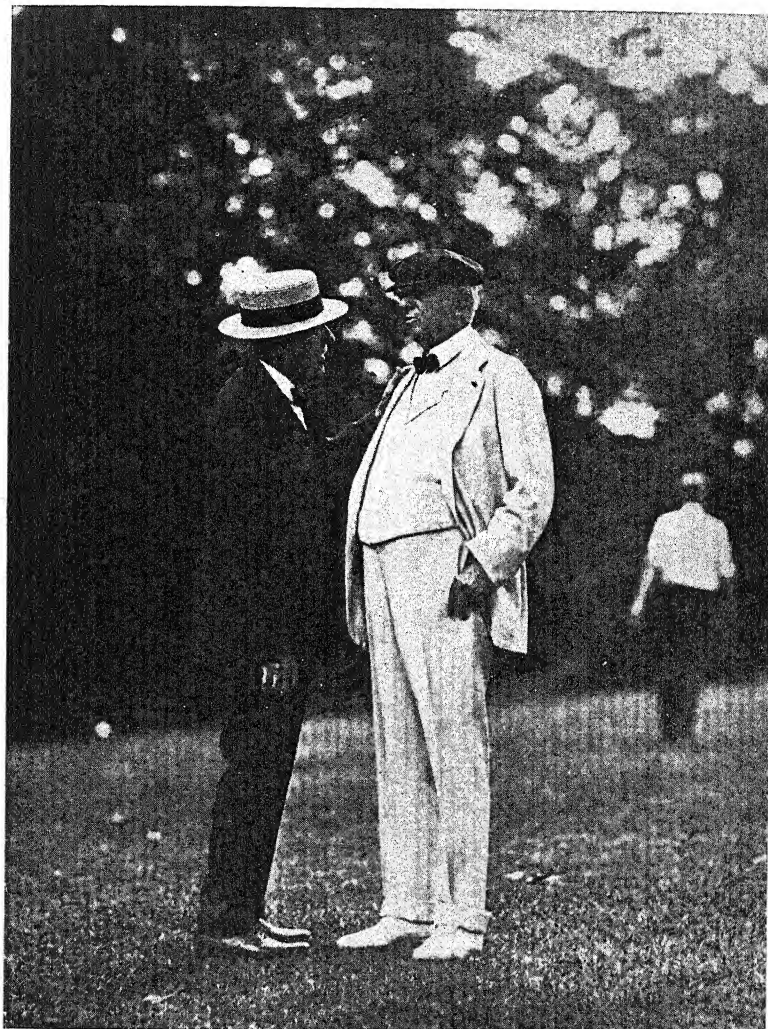
<sup>1</sup> A friend has written us: "They tried to persuade him to take up golf, but he never could see what fun Mr. Rockefeller got out of 'knocking a little ball about.'" A Scotchman, who is known as the father of golf in the United States, says that John Wanamaker first spoke to him about golf in 1908. But he did not take up the game until during the war, when he took some lessons. He did well on the putting greens, the Scotchman explains, but "just as he was beginning to get distance with his wood clubs, particularly the short spoon, he had the misfortune to stumble and hurt his shoulder, so that he was forced to stop playing." But given the fact that he was still active and alert in 1917, although eighty years old, and that he persisted in the things he liked, it is reasonable to suppose that golf had failed to win his interest.

sometimes heavily—for his indiscretions. He never got too old to run along with the young folks and repeat endlessly for grandchildren the stunts which, in an unguarded moment, he had let them know that he could do. The “again” of a child was a dare that he always took. What had seemed natural in the younger man, and not *infra dig.* for a Philadelphia merchant, astonished those who looked on Wanamaker as a big millionaire and a famous public man. But Wanamaker refused to pose. He had not needed to do it when he was young, and he had not acquired the unconscious habit of inhibitions for dignity’s sake.

In his fifties and sixties, he remained so full of spirits, so bubbling over with energy that, being at Lindenhurst, where he could scamper around and play to his heart’s content, was a tremendous outlet for him. He was devoted to his family and loved to be with them. In town he scarcely saw them. At Lindenhurst they seemed to be around most of the time. And in the country it was so easy and delightful to entertain friends. It was a comfort to the father and mother that Thomas and Rodman built homes near Lindenhurst, and that after the daughters married they, too, were not lost to the home circle.

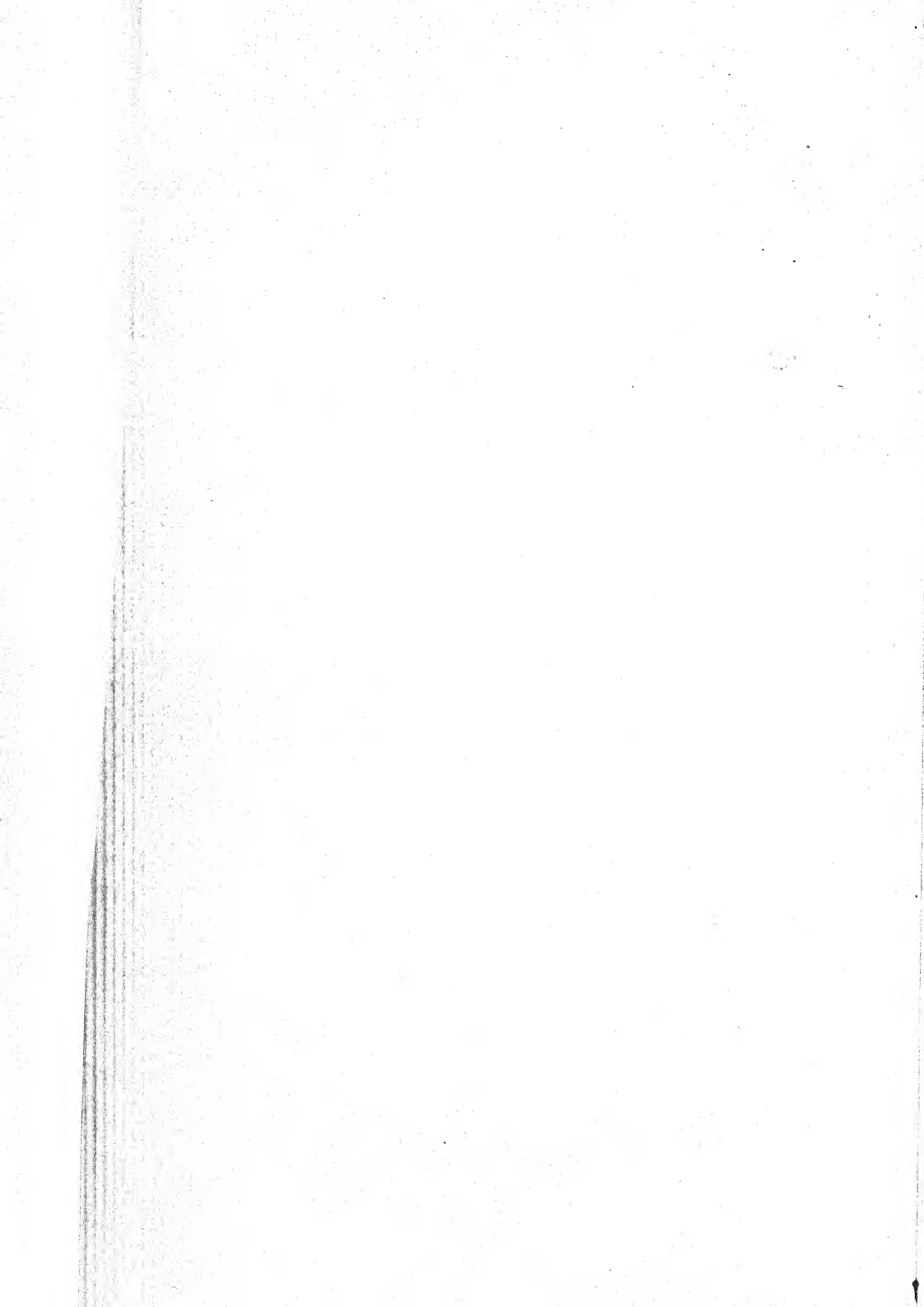
A notable annual event was the entertainment of the Bethany Superintendent’s Bible Class, afterward the Bible Union, and then the Roman Legion of the Brotherhood. The members of the class with their families spent a day every autumn with the Wanamakers. It became in time a big gathering, but Wanamaker always managed to preserve its intimate character. He stayed home from business that day and devoted himself entirely to his guests. The custom, begun in the 1880’s, was continued as long as the Superintendent lived.

Although they had their town houses, gradually father and sons—perhaps partly unconsciously—put more and



WITH A BETHANY BROTHERHOOD MAN AT THE ANNUAL LABOR DAY REUNION AT  
LINDENHURST'

A snapshot of John Wanamaker when he was over eighty



more of the things they prized into the country homes. It was a great shock when Meadowbrook, Thomas B. Wanamaker's house, was burned in 1901. The loss of treasures that could not be replaced was appreciable. Thomas never rebuilt the home. But it shows how something does go wrong with the best-laid plans that John Wanamaker should have thought such a misfortune impossible to happen to Lindenhurst. He believed that his home was fireproof, for he had been so assured by the most competent architects. An elaborate system of fighting fire, with the water of the artificial lake always available, had been devised and installed when Lindenhurst was first built. After the burning of Meadowbrook, experts were called in once more. They made some changes, put in the latest inventions, and told John Wanamaker not to worry.

On February 8, 1907, as if to mark the beginning of what was going to be the hardest year of his life, Lindenhurst was destroyed by fire.<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Wanamaker were in their city house. By telephone they tried to direct the salvaging of the things they loved. It was an icy winter night, and they did not dare to go out. Although willing hands worked feverishly to rescue the art treasures and did succeed in saving the most famous of the paintings,<sup>2</sup> Wanamaker lost his collection of Americana, autographs, first editions, and books and manuscripts painstakingly gathered for the purpose of writing a life of Martin Luther.

<sup>1</sup> The origin of the fire was tragically simple—a maid had forgotten to turn off the current after using an electric iron.

<sup>2</sup> T. B. Wanamaker's losses in 1901 in pictures had been estimated at \$1,500,000. In the Lindenhurst fire the irreparable losses were Murillo's "Our Lady of Madrid"; Rubens' "Two Angels Holding a Garland of Fruit"; Benjamin West's "Saviour"; and Venetian scenes by Canaletto. The two Munkácsy canvases were rescued by neighbors, who went after them the first thing of all, also three pictures of Rubens, nine of Van Dyck, and celebrated pictures of Hals, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Titian, Lawrence, Reynolds, Hogarth, Romney, Turner, Constable, Opie, Gainsborough, Nattier, Chardin, Le Brun, and Largillière. Most of the tapestries and porcelains, and all of the rugs and books, however, were lost.

The fire completely destroyed the house. The appraised loss was over two million dollars.

In his orders by telephone Wanamaker had been insisting that the things prized by his wife be rescued while there was yet time. He gave formal directions to this effect. Consequently, most of Mrs. Wanamaker's furnishings and art objects were carried to the lawn. They were stored in the stable. As if what they had suffered were not enough, while the Wanamakers were abroad in July of the same year spontaneous combustion in the hayloft destroyed the stables and the stored treasures. In the winter the severe cold had prevented fighting the fire. In the summer, extreme heat brought more fire. It developed that Mrs. Wanamaker had gradually been moving her possessions to Lindenhurst and that everything she owned was there.

The next morning, before he realized the number of canvases that had been saved, John Wanamaker faced the total loss of all that he had collected in more than twenty-five years, and of a home whose sentimental value to his wife and him could not be weighed. That he had insurance was no consolation. All who have been through a devastating fire know that insurance policies have to do only with material values. In a home that has long been lived in, these count for little. The first sentence in Wanamaker's diary that morning is, "It will be a blessed thing for us if all our fires are in this world and not in the next."

There was never a thought in John Wanamaker's mind to abandon Cheltenham Hills. Since the early days of his married life Lindenhurst had been home in a way that the town house never had. As they prospered, the Wanamakers had moved from place to place in Philadelphia. All city folk do that. Cheltenham Hills had been their home for forty years. After all, it was the grounds and not the house or its contents that counted. The dense woods, mostly chestnuts and

oaks, on the Mather place that they had originally bought were still there. The brooks still ran down the hill to Tacony Creek. Fire had not changed the upward roll of land, with the high plateau from which the view would still be the same. It was the view that the Continental soldiers had enjoyed when they had their signal post there in the memorable winter of 1777-8. The road that bounded Lindenhurst on the north had been used by Washington when his army marched on the British at Germantown, and it was along this road that the defeated Continentals retreated to Valley Forge. The stone bridge spanning Tacony Creek dated from 1798. Mather's old mill, remodeled as an electric-light plant and power house, had not gone up in the flames. That Lindenhurst should be rebuilt was never questioned.

Wanamaker announced that on the very first day of spring the foundations of the new Lindenhurst would be laid on the site of the old building. "It is for Mother Mary B.," he wrote, "and the plans are to be submitted to her. We shall make it as she wants it—stone by stone, room by room." As far as the owner could have it so, architects being what they are, his wife's wishes were respected.

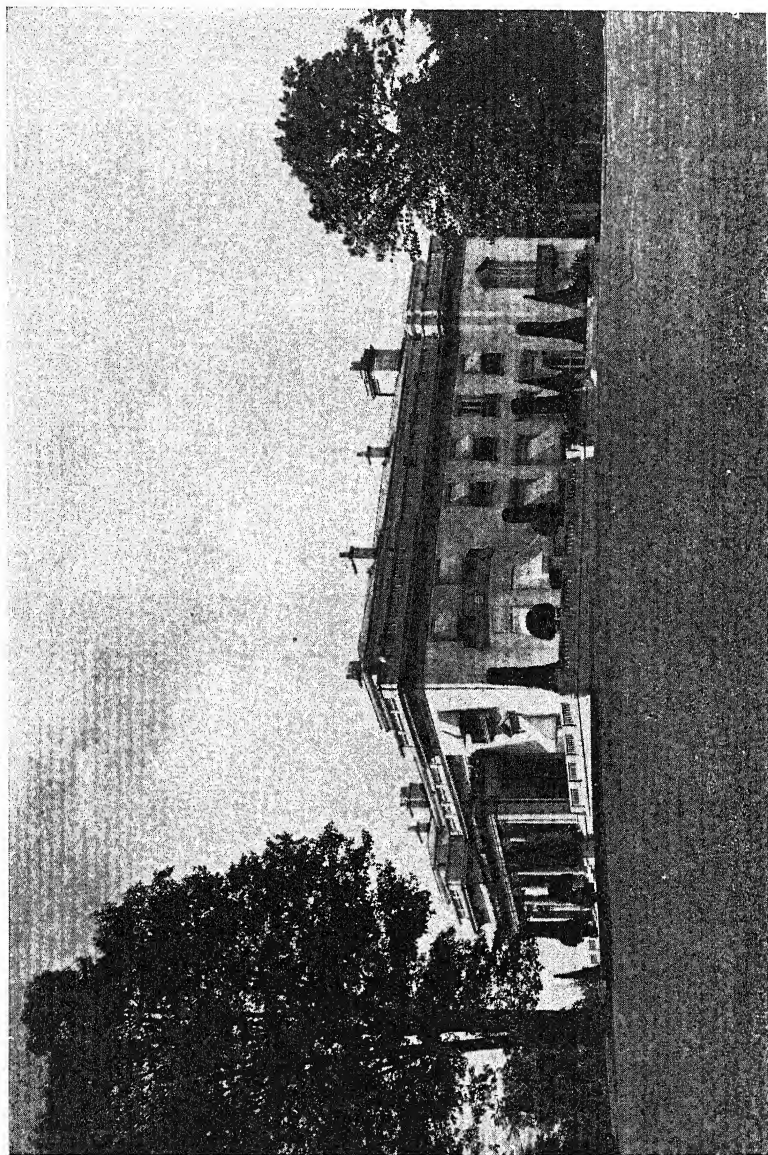
The new Lindenhurst is unusual among the large suburban homes of Philadelphians in that it was built after Mr. and Mrs. Wanamaker had lived on the spot for forty years. A lifetime of experience went into the planning of the house. There was nothing haphazard in the way the house faced, in the arrangements of the rooms, in the exposure of the great sun parlor; and the hall, rectangular in form, was constructed to have the light just right for the hangings of the pictures. In the large salons and the dining room, also, the pictures for the walls were in mind when the plans were drawn. Since they had built the earlier home a quarter of a century before, John and Mary

Wanamaker had come to know the palaces of Europe and they had bought their pictures. In the old Lindenhurst there had been a gallery for paintings, and the library had been altered and enlarged several times for books. In the new Lindenhurst the pictures were an integral part of the building, and the library was constructed to hold the books that Wanamaker wanted to put there.

A formal and detailed description of the new Lindenhurst is out of place here. We need only to say that the great house, and everything on the grounds, give the impression of a home that was lived in. It was not ready-made, and there was never any stop in the development of the grounds. The Wanamakers loved natural beauty and native planting. Trees and flowers were their passion, and they had in common the interest of following plants from the greenhouses to the places they themselves selected out of doors. Honeysuckle was their favorite flower, and they loved climbing roses and flower beds in gay colors.<sup>1</sup> The study of birds was the pursuit of a lifetime, and Mrs. Wanamaker so thoroughly sympathized with her husband's liking for squirrels and rabbits that she had no dogs on the place. Hunting they never indulged in, themselves, and they refused to allow their people to use buckshot against birds that were deemed pests.<sup>2</sup> They stayed at

<sup>1</sup>"At the supper table" on June 27, 1910, Wanamaker jotted down: "A bunch of crimson ramblers is in the center of the table, encircled with honeysuckle. The Lindenhurst fences are rich with vines, golden, white, and red, whose perfume rises to you."

<sup>2</sup>"I had my dinner out upon the front porch, which is only accessible to the robins, of which I counted seventeen. There are really hundreds of them here all over the place, for the shot of a gun is never heard on the premises." We cannot refrain from quoting a graphic editorial: "What is a bird good for? some people ask. If you could have heard yesterday morning's pre-sunrise musicale of the birds around the white porch, where they flock for breakfast, you would say that you never heard such singing in all your life from any human beings. There they were, a happy family,—robins, bluebirds, blackbirds, threshers, meadow larks, sparrows, bobolinks, not all singers, out trying to practice their scales, and some of them half fizzling a note or a whistle, as if they were dreaming in their sleep."



THE NEW LINDENHURST

(Photo. by C. H. Miller)



Lindenhurst until after the Christmas holidays, and moved back in the early part of May. During the summers that John Wanamaker felt that he had to stick by his business, and when the rest of the family were away, he lived in a little house known as the bungalow, where he could enjoy "the simple life" of his friend Charles Wagner. For the grandchildren there was a playhouse called the Birds' Nest, perfectly equipped in miniature to the smallest kitchen utensil.

A delightful pursuit of the latter days was the grandfather's walks and talks with his "little folk." For his grandchildren he invented the "squeegeecumsquees," a marvelous family who inhabited the rocks and woods and hedges and did all sorts of things. The children could never see them when he pointed them out, so he had to tell what the squeegeecumsquees were doing. Some of the stories he wrote down. They are too fragmentary to reproduce, but they illustrated his fertile imagination and show how he could transport himself at any time into a world of his own creating.

Letters, diaries, and addresses are full of references to things done and seen at Lindenhurst. On a June Sunday in 1909 he wrote:

Rising at 6:15, not sleeping well—the bungalow was warm and the night was wet. But the morn is bright. I came down a few minutes before breakfast and there was no one up except in the kitchen.

I went out into a bed of rhododendrons sixty feet square—only it was oval. Out of it bounced almost across my feet a brown-tailed rabbit. Bees were humming, birds were singing, chicks were waking and crowing up the daylight, and cows at the barn were mooing for the milkers and all about was the Sunday peace, even in a whistling boy that passed along the road.

After prayers with Sebastian alone and breakfast I autocarred to town, picking up Ellinger and Horney on the way, and such a welcome as I had from the big and little Bethanyites!

Many of the editorials of the last decade of Wanamaker's life were written at Lindenhurst. For instance, on Thanksgiving Day of 1917:

Mother Earth woke yesterday morn to find her face covered with the silent snow. Even the stone walls had put on white nightcaps in the dark.

Huge white Christmas leaves glistened on the trees, and the green hedges and the bushes were delicately embroidered in snow white.

A white horse crept up the hill and a gray squirrel ran along the top fence rail, looked around, and hurried back to his nest in the crotch of the oak tree, as there was no breakfast for him in sight any place else.

Bright-eyed and wise little squirrel, to be aforehand with stores laid up for stormy days. "Lessons in brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The bees, the rippling streams, the birds, the squirrels and the little chipmunks are good teachers of forehandedness.

Surely in this blessed land of rich, well-stored harvests, in spite of absences of our boys, we can have at least a glad Thanksgiving time.

The joy of life at Lindenhurst departed when Mrs. Wanamaker died at Atlantic City in the summer of 1920. She had been away for many months, and almost up to the last Wanamaker believed that she would return. He used to go to her sitting room and pat the arm of the chair in which she loved to sit, and then go on without a word to his own apartments. The rooms were kept just as if she were there, with her favorite flowers freshly cut each day. After her death Wanamaker continued to go to Lindenhurst, and he had his usual annual gatherings of church people there. But the spring days were spent in Florida, and during his last two summers, because he could not go through to the end of the sonnet, it was hard for the one who remained to "summon to the sessions of sweet silent thought remembrance of things past."

## CHAPTER XI

### IN THE COMPANY OF THE SAINTS JOHN

"IT was by traveling that I learned to travel," Wanamaker once told a group of Masons. They readily understood what he meant when he explained the impression made upon him by three events in the three voyages that he regarded as the most memorable of his life. On his Holy Land cruise, in 1896, he had seen men wearing aprons following a little funeral in a little village above Beirut. It was the first time he had ever realized that Freemasonry was not simply a phase—of which he knew nothing—of American Protestant life. And then, in his cruise to the Land of the Midnight Sun in 1899, the year after he had taken his Blue Lodge degrees, he noted that the highest-degree Masons on the *Auguste Victoria* held meetings in "a special room, guarded by the ship's officers," to which twenty men of different nationalities were admitted. On January 31, 1902, when he was in Bombay, he was able to work his way in to Lodge Perseverance, at the Masonic Temple, where he was present at the installation of the new officers of the year.

John Wanamaker was nearly sixty years old before he decided to become a Mason. His home, his church, and his business had so completely filled his life that clubs and fraternal organizations failed to attract him. He did not hold secret organizations of any kind in high esteem, and he more than once expressed the opinion that they were undemocratic and tended to divert a man's time, attention, and energy from more important activities and duties. He

had said, too, that lodges were a breeding-ground for intolerance. But many friends were Masons, and when one of them was frank enough to tell him after his bitter campaign of 1897 that his holding aloof from fraternal orders could easily be interpreted by his enemies as an indication that he possessed the very characteristics for which he condemned them, he had food for thought. He began to think about Freemasonry, and discovered that most of the Americans he admired from Washington down to his own day were Masons.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of 1898 he applied for initiation and received the signal honor of being admitted to the first three degrees, in company with his friend Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. It is probable that the move had been made without much enthusiasm or expectation, and that what he learned was a great surprise. He discovered that the symbolism of the Masonic voyage was in perfect harmony with his religious belief and experience and thus he became a zealous neophyte at the age of sixty. Masonry captured his imagination, and he entered into the craft with devoted and intelligent enthusiasm.

In 1900 he joined Friendship Lodge No. 400, of Jenkintown, near Lindenhurst, and worked his way through the chairs until he became Worshipful Master in 1905. When we consider the many interests of his busy life in Philadelphia, New York, and Europe between 1900 and the outbreak of the World War, his Masonic history is remarkable. Through both the Commandery and the Consistory he worked his way up to the thirty-second degree,

<sup>1</sup> When his prejudice against fraternal orders disappeared, he was glad also to join the Odd Fellows, and became a member of American Star Lodge, No. 405. In his later years he took part on several occasions in public ceremonies of the I. O. O. F.

and was honored with admission to the thirty-third degree by the Supreme Council on September 16, 1913.

Wanamaker studied Masonry and followed it in the same way that he studied and followed everything that had won his heart. He loved to go back over the work, mastering the ritual, and finding in it the application of the great truths of the Christian philosophy of life to himself and to his relations with other men. It satisfied the latent mysticism in the man that the exercise of religious duties and of worship in the stern and rigid school of Calvinism had denied him. In going through the degrees he came to see that they were capable of an esoteric meaning of a fascinatingly speculative kind that went far beyond the cut-and-dried utilitarianism of testing faith by works. His creed had always been simple and practical, and the kind of religious life he had lived tended to satisfy the inner strivings of the soul with the vague emotional outlets of prayer and singing. Every man of æsthetic temperament needs ritual and mystery; he craves for symbolism. When he finds it, the sense of beauty and order in his religious life is satisfied. What John Wanamaker experienced in his Masonic life has been well expressed by an English Freemason:

The Entered Apprentice degree represents the first dim stirrings, the first anxious desire to turn from worldly things toward the light; the Fellowcraft degree a period of enthusiastic support of some religious system or orthodox dogmatic church; the Master Mason degree a period of doubts and difficulties. The old faith, which we have accepted because we have been taught it, no longer holds us. We question and query, and there is no one to set us at rest. Then suddenly something occurs which shatters our faith in the society to which we belong, say an unjust act toward ourselves or others by those set in a position of trust or even of authority. The old faith lies dead—slain, perhaps, by those most bound in honor to be true to its high teaching. The man

who has passed through this stage feels numb spiritually; his very soul lies shattered. He descends into the mystical grave.<sup>1</sup>

Then, of course, comes the resurrection, and through all the higher degrees the light is gradually revealed of the solid foundation upon which our religion rests, and what we must go through in heart and mind to become worthy followers of the great Exponent until, "not only with our lips, but in our lives," we can show forth "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

Shortly after he became a Mason, Wanamaker announced that he intended to become an active member of the craft. His passage through the chairs of his lodge, and the time he took to qualify for the higher degrees, demonstrate that he was as good as his word. We find in the files numerous reports of the Library and Museum Committee of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania of which he was chairman up to his death. To the Grand Lodge he presented many valuable books and documents, including a parchment Hebrew manuscript of the Pentateuch.<sup>2</sup> He set himself to the task of collecting Masonic certificates with such success that he was able to write that the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge's collection was "more complete and valuable than the celebrated Crowe collection lately acquired by the Grand Lodge of England at the cost of £2,000. Among our French specimens is a certificate of His Serene Highness Louis Philippe d'Orléans, Duc de Chartres, afterward King of France." He served also on the Grand Lodge's employment committee, and was made a member of the American Supreme Council in 1920. He was a charter member of the National Masonic Research Society. As a

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Ward, *Explanation of the Royal Arch Degree*, page 38.

<sup>2</sup> At Wanamaker's request, his friend Rabbi Krauskopf made the presentation speech. The rabbi said: "Within my hand I hold a treasure than which there are few comparable with it in intrinsic worth. Your librarian searched through the book stores of Europe for it."

lasting memorial of his devotion to Masonry he built for his own lodge at Jenkintown a classic temple in Doric style, with a lodge room seating three hundred and fifty. This building bears the inscription: "Presented to Friendship Lodge by Brother John Wanamaker, P. M., January 11, 1913."

His correspondence contains many allusions to Masonic events. When President Roosevelt visited the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge, Wanamaker gave to every Mason attending a specially printed edition of Pastor Wagner's *Simple Life*, with the printed inscription: "A brother Mason's souvenir of the visit of President Roosevelt to the sesqui-centennial of Washington's initiation as a Freemason, observed by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, November 5, 1902." He welcomed the conclave of the Knights Templar at the Philadelphia store in May, 1903.

From his diary we take at random four entries:

At 9 I was at the Masonic Temple and was most courteously received by a Committee in the Library and escorted to the Chapter Room, a noble Oriental Hall with the Chapter in conclave. I was addressed by the High Priest in a public address and escorted to a seat on the throne beside the Grand King. My speech was at the Banquet and had to be changed on the spot to suit the occasion. They were most responsive and cheered me at a great rate all the time and at the close with 3 cheers and a tiger, standing, and the band drums rolling.

Many years later he wrote:

I came up from Chelsea yesterday on the Seven and filled out the usual program at Bethany until the opening of the Sunday School was over, when I jumped over my rules and went with the Masonic Grand Lodge to observe the 125th Anniversary of its independence from British Masonic rule. We attended Christ Church in a body 3 or 400 strong, walking down Market Street from Masonic Hall. The Grand Lodge worshiped in Christ Church in 1796. At 12 to-day I attended the session of the Grand Lodge to hear the Masonic addresses.

And again:

I am one of 600 men in the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of Pa., all wearing regalia. I am seated on the Tribune near the R. W. G. M.'s Chair, as I have made the Library Committee report. Another Chairman is making a report that I cannot hear, and I am sitting in a recess where but few see me writing.

On November 14, 1912, we have:

I've been busy to-day with a General Assembly committee. Friday I have a Masonic degree to take in the afternoon. A telegram from President Taft asks me to come to N. Y. on Monday to meet him and return on his train.

His later estimate of fraternal orders is expressed in the peroration of his address at the laying of the corner stone of the Odd Fellows' Orphanage in Philadelphia on September 4, 1911:

"Free Masonry and Odd Fellowship have won their way to a firm footing throughout the globe because they make for good citizenship, enforcement of laws, true friendship. The light of kindness, love and sympathy has been kept burning steadily from every lodge room for centuries over all the earth.

"These orders are built upon the Bible and work with the Bible. . . . I count it a privilege for a man to find the way into any place where liquors, profanity, gambling, indecent books, papers and speeches are excluded and where he is brought face to face to be reverently taught to think of the word of God.

"The binding life of a lodge is its altar, upon which lies an open Bible."

## CHAPTER XII

### LATER EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS

AFTER he had acquired the habit of Europe, Wana-maker was sedulously encouraged in it by all his family. It seemed to be—and it was—the only way to pry him loose occasionally from Bethany and from the long days in the office in Philadelphia and New York. If he had cared for yachting and had been willing to cruise in distant waters, that would have been fine. But he was too dependent upon human contacts to be happy where there were not many people and much hustle, even when he was taking a cure. He just had to be with people and live where there was action.<sup>1</sup>

Going abroad every year was the ideal way to make him take two ocean trips and to afford him the joy of city life in London and Paris without the self-imposed burden of full days in the office. And crossing the Atlantic, and at hotels in watering-places, he was in the midst of people just as much as in the big cities. Carlsbad and Biarritz were thronged with visitors from all countries, among whom there were invariably friends of earlier years. When he grew restless or became bored at one place he could go to another. The trouble with American resorts was that when this happened he would invariably return to work.

<sup>1</sup> The biographer finds on several occasions a frank confession that any form of inactivity and passive restfulness bored and tired him. The secret of his joy in Lindenhurst was that his country mornings and evenings there were constantly balanced by days in the city. The pleasure he had in observing nature was in hours off—not days off. In New York he could get all he wanted in Central Park or in a half-day riding swiftly in the country. Then he was ready to get back to the city.

How much good the transatlantic crossing did John Wanamaker is strikingly revealed in his letters and diaries. The day after he boarded the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* on March 16, 1903, he wrote to his Bethany scholars that he already felt like a new man. There was the tinge of regret at leaving home and all the associations in which he felt he "still played a part," but, after all, was he not more effective both at Bethany and in his business by being away from them occasionally? He asked himself that question, and the affirmative answer was not because absence gave him perspective, but because on shipboard and away from the daily grind he had time to think and plan, to come to mature decisions, and to replenish his physical strength and "the zest of his mind." It was too wonderful for words to go to bed and hear the ship's bells strike and to know that there was a lookout saying, "*Alles wohl.*" That was how he felt. But the engines were pounding and the ship was moving.

His companion on this Mediterranean cruise was the Bethany pastor who had accompanied him on his first trip abroad in 1871. After a lapse of more than thirty years Dr. Lowrie was as fit and youthful as Wanamaker, and it was a great joy for the two old friends to travel again in Europe together. They stopped at Funchal and Gibraltar and arrived at Rome by way of Genoa and Florence at the beginning of April. It was a real sight-seeing trip and the two men, both well over sixty, "did" Rome and the surrounding country for a fortnight in tireless tourist fashion. On April 6, for example, he wrote of a long day in the country exploring Castle Gondolfo and the neighborhood:

What a day it has been! From the roof of the Orsini Palace we could see 25 miles to the sea. The ramble in the summer sun amid magnolias, oleanders, other blossoming trees, and wild flowers, was delicious. We

had a fine luncheon and a jolly time at the Ristorante Sallusti, where no doubt Lucullus and later Byron lunched on the same kind of soup and fish and cheese in their day.

A week at Naples followed, and then the travelers went for the cure at Carlsbad. After three weeks Wanamaker left Lowrie there, and visited Paris, and then London, where he made a speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet and the next day "dined with the Steads and the Servian Minister, and afterward went with them late to the opera." The next afternoon he "saw the demonstration in Hyde Park of the nonconformists against the Education Bill just passed. It was a unique spectacle, and 100,000 people were in it." Of the visit of this year to the exhibition at the Royal Gallery we have spoken in another place.<sup>1</sup>

His pleasure in being homeward bound was keen. From his diary on May 25 "on board *Wilhelm der Grosse* sailing for America," we take:

Home looms up before me—its friends that I shall love more and its work that I shall bring new vigor to. My rambles here have not caught brambles, but have brought delightfulnesses, whose memory will brighten and lighten.

The weeks in Europe in 1904 were spent mostly in London, with a cure at Carlsbad grudgingly sandwiched in between. The original intention had been to save London for the return voyage. But there was an urgent letter at Paris from Henniker Heaton begging his old friend to spend a May week-end in the country with him. So he shifted his plans suddenly; that he was always able to do this is one of the prime reasons for his happiness as well as his success. Reaching London on the evening of May 12, he wrote:

It is a cold, fog-buried London and the channel was wintry and wet

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. ii, p. 79.

with mist. A perpetual scream of the fog horn racked my nerves and I was glad to get on the Dover dock. A cup of English tea and a cross bun for a sixpence warmed me and for two hours the train whirled me through Kent and Surrey meads and meadows, and the green hills and flocks of sheep lazily browsing in them were rare pictures of delight.

It was eight o'clock when we stopped at Victoria Station.

After dinner I had a phone message from the House of Commons that Lord Stanley, the Postmaster-General, was to speak, and thither I went, meeting my old friend Henniker Heaton, and I stayed until after twelve, watching the customs of the oldest and most formal legislative body in the world.

The next day his diary tells us of the Prime Minister's reception.

At 10 Downing Street in the house of the Premier Balfour where Gladstone lived, I write this while the carriage is coming to take me home. A most brilliant party it was, over 600 of the leading people of London. Mr. Balfour, a bachelor, with his sister, received most graciously and I was ushered into the series of drawing rooms where Disraeli, Salisbury, Gladstone and others, back to Pitt's time, held their salons and settled grave questions. Here Benjamin Franklin walked about in his plain coat and commanded admiration by his simple manners, and homely speech.

The first persons I met were the Duke of Norfolk and his Duchess; Sir Michael Hicks Beach, a leader of the House of Commons; Sir John Gorse; and members of the Cabinet galore.

What a night to have!

The week-end was spent at Bexhill-on-the-Sea, home of Henniker Heaton, M. P. for Canterbury. Wanamaker was "quite ready for the quiet and sea air," although he was "sorry to lose a Sunday in London where my old friends Spurgeon and F. B. Meyer and my newer friend at the City Temple, Mr. Campbell, all are." Back in London on Tuesday he attended Stanley's funeral at Westminster Abbey, and then

went to luncheon at the Commons and saw some members, and had

coffee on the terrace, where I met Mrs. John Strange Winter, the writer, and her daughters.

I left there and went to call on Sir George Williams and Mr. Passmore, and got a few books at Pater Noster Row and then returned again to the House of Commons and also visited the House of Lords, where I stayed to dinner with Sir Benjamin Stone and at nine o'clock took a favored seat next to the King's seat in the gallery. The occasion was a momentous one that threatened the overturn of the Ministry and everything was keyed up to the highest pitch of excited interest and anxiety.

The debate was upon a resolution regarding the proposed tariff and it was a two-edged sword. If adopted by the Commons it would have been a vote of non-confidence compelling the Ministry to resign. The speeches on both sides were masterly, especially Sir William Wyndham's, Joe Chamberlain's, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Lord Cecil and Mr. Asquith.

At 12 midnight by the closure rule the House divided and all the members went out and came in through different doors and were counted for or against the question. The Government was sustained by a small majority. The intensity and alarm on the one side and the energy and bitterness on the other were new experiences for me.

The next two days were given to excursions in the country which are described in the diary. There is a little "addenda from a Canterbury Pilgrim—to be slipped into its place after page 46," which seems to have been written en route on Wednesday, May 18:

My friend and I are to spend the day at old Canterbury. We are in a hansom on the way to the London, Chatham and Dover side of Victoria Station. Mr. Heaton will be waiting with a compartment secured and we shall be snug and unmolested in our window corners looking out—now we are doing it—on the woods and vales and clean homes of the little villages. It is a two-hour ride toward Dover before the battlements on the cathedral appear. Here they are. Unfortunately the Primate of all England is absent and we cannot have tea at the Archiepiscopal Palace. But to be together is better than tea, and what we see together is better than any social attention.

We arrive to find Captain Lambert waiting, and his house and gardens are luminous with welcome. A lovely luncheon at 1:40 and some music by the two young ladies and then over to the great nave of the glorious

Cathedral of Thomas à Kempis, where a Whitsuntide service is just beginning conducted by the Dean and a majestic choir of men and boys singing solos, duets, and parts in the most elaborate service I have ever seen in a Protestant church.

The echoes and far-away tones of the great organ and the boys with women's voices singing and chanting fairly carried me off my feet.

After the service we had only time to stroll over the Cathedral and see its chapels and tombs and then have a drive through the ancient town, the seat of the ecclesiastical empire of all England.

I saw the new archbishop in the House of Lords, but I had no chance then to meet him without too much trouble. Last year when I was here I had delightful courtesies from Archbishop Temple and his gracious lady. Now he is in Heaven. Dean Farrar also, who once showed me over the Deanery, has gone to his reward, and there is another in his place here. How strange it all seems—and how suggestive!

The trip to Windsor is described thus:

There's a coach and four

At the door

To take us to Windsor

16 horses going and 16 returning, with four changes. Such a dash and trumpeting! Horses flying and everyone eying the gay coaching party. Now we reach the country. Larks sing to us and trees smile a sunny welcome. . . .

On the 20th Wanamaker wrote:

Dean succeeded yesterday in getting tickets on the through train from London to Carlsbad *via* Ostend, so off I go at 10 A.M. much to the disgust of my friends, who beg me to stay, but the rush of things is too much for me if I am to have rest. I will keep to my program to rest at Carlsbad and leave for another time some good things.

When he got to Carlsbad the next day he found that "the lovely old hills were all still standing in their old places" and that "coming so often, there is to me an air of home about the streets and the queer domiciles."

His doctor found him "in better condition than this time a year ago." Once more Wanamaker had to start his "drinks and diet and baths and all the rest." But he

found that "these great solitudes and silences, so far from all the usual things of my life, are Heaven-given remedies for tiredness." Carlsbad was as of old, and in a few days he began to tramp, seeing "gleams of sun on the hills" and "far views from the terrace of the Schweitzerhof," where he was breakfasting with "three or four hundred climbers," and thinking that "the mountains and birds are most inviting with their smiles and songs."

But he would not give more than three weeks to his cure, and wrote on June 14:

I always feel sorry to leave a place or person that has been good to me, and Carlsbad Springs have given me so many good drinks, the mountains so many good drives, and the wooded heights have so often bowed to me as I passed along that I feel them all to be good friends. Moreover the perfect unbroken respite from responsibility has been so good for me.

After a few days in Paris attending the Salon and buying numerous pictures, Wanamaker was back in London, where he felt more at home than ever before in his life because he had received the unique distinction of being elected an honorary member of the Carlton Club. In announcing this "act of international courtesy," the *London Times* stated that he was "the first foreigner on whom this distinction was conferred." He wrote home that "I was installed as a member of the great and exclusive Carlton Club, with the Duke of Marlborough, Earl Jersey, Lords Hamilton, Donnamore, and Waldron." Probably it was the unusualness of the honor that made him appreciate it so deeply and frequent the Carlton Club in 1904 and again in 1905, when the honorary membership was renewed.<sup>1</sup> For, as we have seen, he was never anything of a club man at home.

<sup>1</sup> On May 2, 1905, Henniker Heaton wrote: "When you come you will again be elected an Honorary Member of the Carlton Club for three months. It has been ruled that 'foreigners' cannot be permanent members." Wanamaker enjoyed his second year in the club so much that, when he was returning home, he offered to present a portrait of President Roosevelt to the club, and, when the offer was accepted, he commissioned Sargent to

The doors of London society had opened to the Philadelphia merchant, to the extent that he was presented at Court on June 22. Of his evening at Buckingham Palace he wrote that when the invitation was received his man Dean was "very much excited about getting me dressed up"! The secretary of the embassy, Henry White, "wanted me to hire the clothes, and I wouldn't go in hired clothes. So I went to my tailor at eleven A.M. and browbeat him into patching some clothes together by eight P.M. Then I went to the House of Commons and saw the House of Lords in session, and then left home to get into my clothes, and from there to the Whitehall home of Mr. White." The next morning he wrote from the Carlton Club, where he went to breakfast:

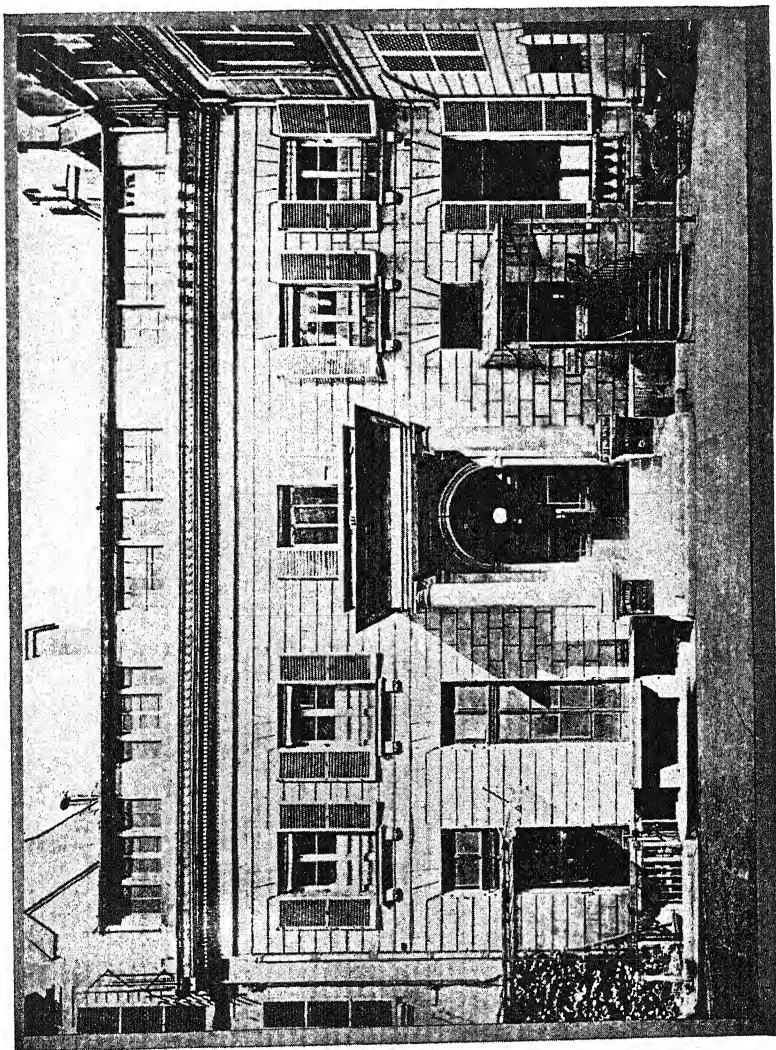
I was glad enough to get off my new shoes with silver buckles at two o'clock this morning and I stayed abed until nine.

It was an altogether overpowering sensation to shoot ahead of a mile of carriages containing titled and untitled but entitled people, and enter the favored door of the diplomats, and be received in the Audience Chamber of the King.

The scene was brilliant. The King and Queen and the retinue of the households of the Royal family entered late, with a group of sixty ladies and gentlemen, sashed and flashed with jewels.

The American Ambassador was announced after the Dean, and I was following him and was presented, and took my place with the diplomats in the second line in front of the King and Queen, and stood there

paint it. This led some of the old Tories in the club to comment on the stronghold of British monarchy being willing to hang the portrait of "a President of a republic," and to the counter-contention on the part of those who had decided to accept the Wanamaker offer that "England is in reality the greatest republic in the world." In the discussion at the Carlton Club, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who presided, repudiated the suggestion made by some one that Wanamaker and Roosevelt were "foreigners." Consequently the way was paved for the election of Wanamaker to honorary life membership. When this was announced in the press, charges were made that Wanamaker had been "a subscriber to the Clan-na-Gael, a rebel Irish society," and that "he had sent a messenger to Krueger hoping every Englishman would be shot." The club refused even to investigate the charges, calling them "absurd and unfounded."



PARIS HOUSE, 44 RUE DES PETITES ECURIES



seeing everything while the 450 ladies filed in, announced by name, and paid their respects to the sovereigns.

The dispersion came about 12:30 to the lovely rooms where refreshments were served. I left the people at their cups at 1:20. The King and his party were in another room.

But he enjoyed an evening reception at Stafford House the following night more than the more formal Drawing-Room. Concerning the Duchess of Sutherland's reception, he wrote that it came after "tea and cake with Mr. and Miss Choate and a drive in Hyde Park later."

But the night at Stafford House!!!

Such a night

Such a house. The finest old thing in London.

Such a company

Such pictures

Such grand halls

Such wonderful staircases.

Such a handsome young thing was the Duchess of Sutherland at the top of the staircase receiving in her coronet and diamonds.

Such a supper afterward, and best of all the fine talk I had with the Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria.

My, but I enjoyed it!

Another notable event was a reception at the home of the Marquess of Lansdowne, where he had a long talk on protection with Joseph Chamberlain, which made a lasting impression upon him. Lord Stanley, Pierpont Morgan, and John R. Drexel joined in the discussion. But Wanamaker's eyes were occupied as well as his ears, for he noted that Lansdowne House was "large and lordly, full of treasures gathered by a former Lord Lansdowne, who found many of Hadrian's priceless things in Rome and got them for practically nothing."

A bit of sight-seeing was included with the round of social engagements. For:

This morning I called at Cheyne Walk on Mrs. Stead and then went over to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle's old house where he lived 47 years (paid 35£ per year rent) and tried to die 21 years ago. How good it was to browse among the empty rooms that were the birthplaces of great thoughts that can never die—on a window pane taken from Carlyle's Edinboro student lodgings scratched with a diamond is this:

"Little did my mother think  
That day she cradled me  
What land I was to travel in or  
What death I should dee."

And gayety:

A lovely visit to an old mansion in Cavendish Square for luncheon with three M.P.'s. The afternoon in the Commons and the night at—don't jump when I tell you—to see Sarah Bernhardt in "La Sorcière." Am I needing a governess, a guardian, and a keeper?

The family did jump! They rubbed their eyes to see if they were reading right. It was a departure for Wanamaker to don knee breeches and silk stockings and go to Court. It was more of a departure—it was an unheard-of event—for him to cross the door of a theater. He had never done it before. There is no record that he ever did again. After he was sixty he attended the opera occasionally, because he loved the music so much. But even there he felt that he was out of place. As for the theater, that was anathema. Wanamaker did not believe in theaters, and said so many times. He had the curious notion that attendance upon theatrical performances was a form of sin. Afterward, when teased about the evening in London, he said, solemnly—and he meant it—that he felt it a duty to hear Sarah Bernhardt speak. He had been told so much about her wonderful use of her voice, and he thought that watching her would teach him something.

To shrive himself he attended three services the next day: "to hear my friend Rev. R. J. Campbell at City

Temple in the morning; to hear Bishop Welldon at Westminster Abbey at three; and to worship under my dear old friend Spurgeon at six-thirty." And the next day, declining an invitation of Lord Curzon as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports to "attend him" at Dover in the ceremony of his induction to office, he entrained Monday morning to Liverpool for the Pan-Presbyterian Council, as guest of Ian Maclaren, pastor of a big Liverpool church. He was "delighted with the dignity and importance of the Council," which numbered "about 300 from every nation." He went to the reception at the Lord Mayor's, where he met fellow-Presbyterians from all over the world. His diary shows that he attended every meeting—three sessions a day—"and for all the time." He was interested in the discussion on Higher Criticism, which "waxed hot and fierce," and spoke from the floor. One evening he presided at a popular meeting in the Philharmonic Hall. He referred to his host and hostess as "Mr. and Mrs. Bonnie Briar Bush." At the concluding reception he "spoke a few words on the lawn," and then accompanied "Dr. Watson Maclaren" to the graduation exercises of the University of Liverpool, where he was welcomed by Lord Derby.

It is an indication of his restlessness and sudden decisions that we find him on Tuesday, after describing the sessions of the Council he had attended that day, recording:

I am cabling home about staying for Rodman, who writes me to wait for him. Dear man, I would love to see him! I think I shall wait.

And three days later, being in Liverpool, he was off for New York on the *Campania*, which he "liked very much, though I have not sailed on a Cunarder for 28 years." The next day was the Fourth of July and there were no fire crackers. The 120 passengers, mostly Americans, observed the day at dinner. A British consul on board offered the toast to the Presi-

dent, and I was without notice called upon to offer the toast to King Edward and Queen Alexandra, which I did as best I could.

This voyage was his first experience with wireless telegraphy, in the development of which he was destined to play an important part. The entry in his diary is worth quoting:

On the *Campania*, July 6, 1904.

I received a cable unexpectedly from Mr. Heaton from the House of Commons by Marconi *via* Cape Breton, Canada, in answer to a letter mailed at Queenstown. This kind of communication makes the sea less lonely. Each morning at breakfast we get a daily bulletin of all the news, printed on board and gathered by Marconi. Passing ships unseen equipped with the wireless constantly talk to us.

Only two years before, in a Commencement address at Perkiomen Seminary, he had said:

"I was talking to a member of Parliament at Carlsbad not a long time ago about the wireless telegraph. He had just been talking to Marconi a few days before, and Marconi told him that at Gibraltar the vessels on either side of the straits said good night and good morning and they were 60 miles apart. Marconi didn't know how it was done, but said, 'Anyway, I get there!'"

London and Paris did not receive as much time in 1905 as in 1904. Wanamaker listened to his physicians. In addition to his usual cure at Carlsbad he spent several weeks of quiet at Biarritz in his son Rodman's home, the Villa Duchâtel, which was once owned and occupied by Edward VII. From there he wrote on May 31:

May has been a whole month given to my selfish self for health. I cannot say whether I like rest or not—I doubt if I do—but I am most grateful for so many days of relaxation and improvement in every way; and I must remember that it has been my privilege to enjoy so much while—and because—so many others are harnessed to burdens they are not able to lay down. I have some regrets that I could not have been

in the gasworks battle in Philadelphia. The Gang are worse than I ever painted them.

There was a week in Switzerland, which Wanamaker always loved, although he never tarried there for long; and attendance as a delegate upon the sessions of the fiftieth anniversary of the World's Alliance of the Y. M. C. A. in Paris. That he did not stay longer in Europe was due to the belief that his play and rest should be strictly limited to the spring. Others had to have their vacation in the summer. His sense of responsibility—really a glad feeling that he was still vital to the business he had created—is wonderfully expressed in a letter written from Carlsbad:

Most gladly would I stay, but how can I when all things are adjusted for me to take three places during July and August—one in N. Y. and two in Phila.—

as builder  
manager  
financier  
emergency man

and as you know there will be no one on the spot to meet sudden unexpected things such as fires, breaks, and accidental affairs that might occur—were I to fail to report.

In the spring of 1906 Wanamaker was accompanied by another Bethany pastor, Dr. Charles A. Dickey, and he wrote that he and the clergyman were "sorry to leave Paris—and the Opera," and added that "Dr. Dickey and I are certainly growing WORLDLY!" But he had to go to Carlsbad "to get the large thing for which I came away." Never do his papers show more joy in Carlsbad than in 1906. He spoke of the waters as "God's good brew that comes out of the earth for the healing of mankind." He wrote on May 8:

I never saw this Spa so gorgeously attractive so early in the year as it

is now. The foliage, the birds, the air, the sense of healthfulness, gloriously woo us to the abandonment of care with the promise of repair. Dr. Dickey and I have been installed in places at the morning assembly at the Springs, voted into the Diet Ranks, and made members of the Bathing Club at the Kaiserbad.

A day's program, written in his own hand, indicates that Carlsbad offered "enough to do for the man that soon grew restless because he hadn't enough to do," whenever he went away from his business.

Rising at 6:40

Off to the Springs at 7:10

Up to the Doctor's at 8:10

Taking treatment until 8:45

Up the Hills to Jäger House to breakfast 9:15

Walk down to Kaiserbad 9:50

Kaiserbad bath to 10:45

Church—English Episcopal 11:10

Return to Hotel at 12:15

Massage 12:20 to 1:00

Dressing to 1:10

Walking up to Savoy to lunch with Joseph Pulitzer and friends at 1:30

Luncheon in the garden for 2 hours

Return to hotel at 4:00

Among the many *habitués* of Carlsbad none was more stimulating to Wanamaker than Pulitzer, whom he had known since 1883, when he stopped over in Philadelphia on his way to New York to complete the organization of the *World*. Pulitzer, George W. Childs, and Wanamaker were luncheon guests of A. J. Drexel on that occasion. The vicissitudes of national politics, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, made the *World* one of the most bitter critics of Wanamaker in the early years of the Harrison administration. By attempts to discredit the man through attacking his business Wanamaker felt that Pulitzer was "hitting beneath the belt." But he had learned to dis-

tinguish between the newspaper owner and the personal friend, and only a few years later Wanamaker's telegraphic response to the *World's* request for New-Year sentiments from leading Americans was: "I wish that my friend, Mr. Pulitzer, might get back his eyes and be able to read his own paper."

One day Wanamaker was walking in a forest near Carlsbad when four men on horseback approached. He recognized Pulitzer in the center of the group. Let us continue the story in his own words:

I knew his sight had gone and something moved me to get into the middle of the road, by which I halted the horses as they came toward me. I do not think that any one of the riders knew me except Mr. Pulitzer, who could not see me, but when I shouted to the little group fifty feet away: "Mr. Pulitzer of the New York *World*, halt!" To my great surprise the immediate reply came: "Wanamaker of Philadelphia, is that you?"

Think of two men knowing each other and living three thousand miles apart, when Mr. Pulitzer was abroad and I was in America, and not seeing each other often, and one of them blind. The singular fact that Mr. Pulitzer had sight in his ears when he heard the sound of a voice is an illustration of the wonderful faculties that he had for people and things. It gives the key of the great bureau of talents that he possessed, which were concentrated upon and consecrated to the editorship and publication of a great journal.

I have only to add that Mr. Pulitzer halted and introduced his secretary and his doctor and some other friend and begged me to get up on his horse, which I declined under the promise to take luncheon with him at the Koenig's Villa that same day. We sat in the garden talking together for three hours. As I think of that morning as he talked of affairs in America, his plans for his future and interest in the questions of the day, the trees over our heads seemed to bloom and sparkle with new life and color because of his brilliant conversation and wonderful purposes yet to be accomplished. He was not only a magnificent talker, but he was one of the most determined doers I ever knew. It is a great thing to have known a man that lived up so well to standards and who never quit any work until his duty was done.

In the 1906 Carlsbad diary Wanamaker speaks of Pulitzer a number of times. One entry follows:

I took up this sheet to write at 4 o'clock and Mr. Pulitzer was announced with carriage to take me driving. The wet morning and the succeeding dampness made it out of the question for me to drive, so I went down to be excused. The poor, blind, shelved man let me off, but came up to this room piloted by Dr. Hosmer and they only left five minutes ago.

During the few days in London that followed Carlsbad Wanamaker frequented the Carlton Club and the House of Commons; attended the Pilgrims' dinner "with a very rare lot of Englishmen, Lord Roberts presiding"; and "had a lovely dinner with the Ambassador and Mrs. and Miss Reid. He got home only this afternoon and sent for me at once. Such a beautiful house it is that they are in."

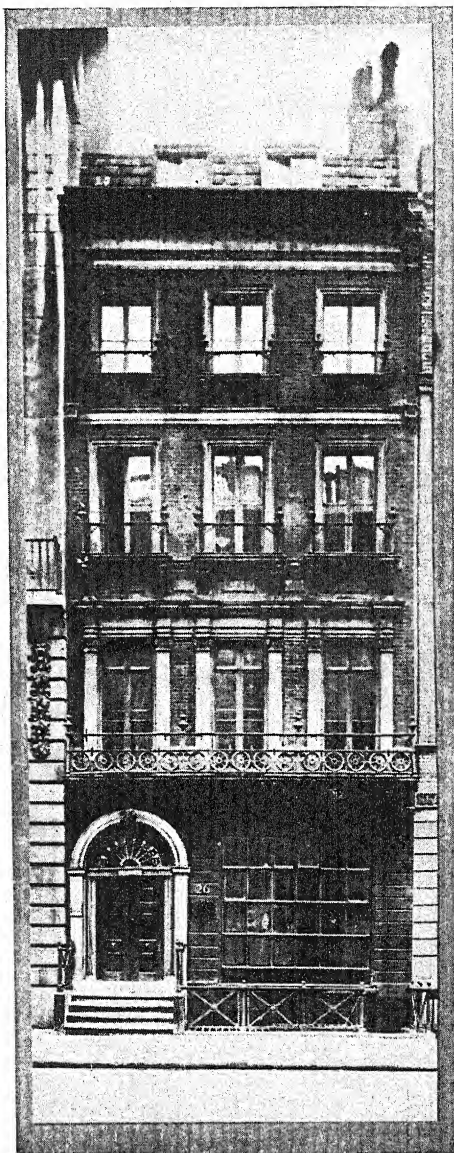
One place mentioned in the diary this year, although so accessible from London, seems never to have been visited before:

We have come in at 7:30 by way of Putney and Chelsea from the old Kew Gardens, and Palace of George III and his Queen Charlotte, the grandmother of Queen Victoria. How simple everything there looked compared with the gorgeousness of English royalty nowadays. How much sweeter and lovelier all simple things seem to me!

He did not find it

easy to leave London. Whitelaw Reid has a great reception next week and I am invited and urged hard to stay to speak on a platform with Balfour, but I came for rest and sunny air and not anything else but health-getting, so I turn my back on it all and go off into the quiet. I am ready to start at 11 for Paris *en route* to Biarritz the last stage of my holiday.

On the Calais boat at Dover, just before starting across, Wanamaker noted that "the English were kind, yet I do not like their Channel manners, either coming or going. It



LONDON HOUSE, 26 PALL MALL



is as if the water were mixed with French capers and English stubbornness."

If 1906 was a good year for Carlsbad, it was also a good year for Biarritz. At this period Wanamaker was indefatigable in recording his impressions. On June 10 there is a remarkable description of the "straw walled and thatched chapel with sand floors like the shore in Atlantic City" in the "Convent of Silences," and the next day at Cambon he sat in the open air under the trees, after climbing for nearly three hours, and wrote:

What a Paradise it is! I am overcome with the enthralling spirit that pervades the place. I do not see how Rostand could have written less fervently than he did from here. To sit all day feeding your eyes and saturating yourself with the odors of rose gardens and bathing in the Pyrenees pine air must intoxicate anyone.

1907 and 1908 were tragical and critical years for John Wanamaker. How he rode the storm and how he faced the loss of his son and partner and his older partner, we have described elsewhere. He did not realize that he was soon going to be called upon to take the place of two of his three helpers, not only in the summer, as he wrote above, but for all the time. It was good fortune, then, that his months abroad in 1907 were in the summer instead of in the spring—a departure from the custom for some years past. He was better able to stand the strain that came so soon after the celebration in connection with the opening of the new building in New York in September of that year.

He went over in July, and aside from two visits to Paris spent most of his two months at Ems and Biarritz. He motored from Paris to Ems, and describes in his diary crossing the frontier.

We are only about half an hour out of Nancy. Already the frontier! Two soldiers and a civilian in white ducks, wearing a panama hat, get

their heads together, look us over, and finally stamp our passports. Just one mile further on we roll our blessed persons and chattels upon German territory. Here it takes much circumlocution. Here we have to sign papers, and pay money for indemnification of any victims our car might possibly hit. Then, having made that deposit, they charge us forty marks for a month's license.

These exceedingly practical German formalities having been gone through with and being now under the rule of the Kaiser, I am made to feel that the charm of the French country is behind us. Alas! It is now only a memory! For am I not now to hear German gutturals henceforth? And to see the soberest people in the world—passing families that remind one of the Man of Wrath and Elizabeth and her April and June babies.

#### And at Ems on July 23:

I was in my room from luncheon until nearly 5, when I went out for my drink. Then I hied me to the Kursaal, where divine music was being played to a large, quiet, unsmiling crowd of homely men and women. Their clothes! Even if I were not ashamed to try, I could never sell them. And yet this is fashion. There was not a soul that I knew. The only face I recognized was that of Kaiser Wilhelm I. He was stone cold to me! It is his grandson that I know.

By his own count Wanamaker wrote over a thousand postcards at Ems that year, mostly to Bethany folks, almost equaling his Carlsbad record. In Paris he twice recorded Sundays at the American church on the rue de Berri, where his son Rodman's family had long worshiped. Then he is once more at the Villa Duchâtel. It was the first midsummer visit to Biarritz; and he had great pleasure in the constant company of two of his grandchildren. He records:

I went off at 1 o'clock to St. John Pied du Porc to the festivities set out in the program within—King Edward VII. and his retinue of ladies went over in three autos and sat together in a special pavilion like unto a throne. The performances were out of doors in a court used for sport and the strange costumes of the Basques and their songs and dances were peculiar and interesting.

On the way back to Biarritz we stopped—Mr. Pancoast and two

children and myself—at Cambon for tea at 5:30 and found the King and his party the sole occupants of the Garden. We sat on a porch close by the party and the King and I bowed as I passed him. A Count in his party came over and spoke to me and to Brownie just before the King left.

The retirement of Robert C. Ogden, the death of Thomas B. Wanamaker, the panic of 1907 and its aftermath, the expansion of the business in New York, the problems of completing the building of the Philadelphia store, found Wanamaker able to do his greatest work at the age of seventy. Once more did he know that he was "absolutely indispensable" to the business. Europe had to go by the board for 1908. And even in February, 1909, when he had not been away for eighteen months, he recorded:

I can ill afford the time just now when I have so much to arrange for others to take upon their shoulders and carry while I am away, but I am so thankful to be able to look forward with a cheery hope. It seems like an almost impossible thing to leave our two big businesses under the direction of one young man, and particularly this New York work, without any acknowledged general and only a few captains and corporals.

But his son Rodman persuaded him to consider Biarritz again and the usual cure. Not the arguments he advanced about the father's health, however, but the conviction the father had that the son could carry on for a while without him, made the elder Wanamaker yield. On February 15, 1909, he wrote:

An all-day procession through my office doors, arranging things so as not to come back here again before sailing. Leaving so much on the shoulders of R. W., one man, is a most serious thing.

Instructions, powers of attorney, adjustments of many unsettled things, always existing in the course of business, coming along naturally, are easily arranged, but massed together because somebody goes away—makes a mountain of work to be climbed over.

Wanamaker sailed on the *Cedric* on February 20. Having promised to go to Biarritz and not to do things in London or Paris, there is little recorded of social events in the English and French capitals. Wanamaker was weary. He did not confess it, nor did he admit that he had aged by reason of years or because of the grilling experiences through which he had passed since the summer of 1907. But he wrote few letters, and the entries in the diary are shorter and less frequent. At Biarritz in March he met King Edward again. Mrs. Warburton was at the Villa Duchâtel. He went to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, "where I can have quiet when I want to be quiet," as he put it. He devoted himself to his granddaughter, "Brownie." He took Brownie and her little friends to

Bayonne, where they had orangeade and sweet cakes while I took tea and toast. Then we walked among the queer little French shops and I bought some little things for them and brought them back happy. Brownie, who is not yet thirteen, comes here presently to dine with me downstairs in evening dress. Think of that for the youngster!

I met the Grand Duchess Xenia of Russia at the Villa Duchâtel this morning. One sees plainly the affectionate regard she and my daughter have for each other. The Duchess broached to me at once her great desire to have Mrs. W. remain longer.

In 1910, when he was over for June and July, there was still little desire to write copiously about the things abroad. It was not until 1911 that Wanamaker was himself again and had the strength and zest to enjoy Europe thoroughly.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CORONATION EXPERIENCES

THE Jubilee Year was marked by a memorable trip to Europe. With the preparations for the dedication of the new building in Philadelphia and the gala celebration of his fifty years in business not yet completed, the venerable merchant (he would never have applied that adjective to himself) was literally "hustled out of the country," as he humorously put it. On March 29, he sailed on the *Oceanic*, accompanied only by a manservant. The excuse for going—he always had to have one—was the necessity of finding new offices in London, and he wanted to choose them himself. But the temptations to which he succumbed were a month of spring at his son Rodman's country estate, in Biarritz, Bellefontaine, and an invitation to attend the coronation of King George and Queen Mary.

The family and his business chiefs in Philadelphia and New York were keen to have him go. They always felt what he never felt, that constant application to business might break down his health, none too good at the time. The strain of four strenuous years, with all the care and worries that he would not and the grief that he could not place on other shoulders, had begun to tell upon him. His physicians prescribed three months of complete change—they knew better than to say rest—before he was called upon to be the center of the Jubilee events that had been wisely postponed from April until later in the year.

Positive instructions had been sent to the Wanamaker representatives in London that he was to be hustled out of

England, too, and not allowed to take up the problem of the London offices until he had had a vacation tour in Europe. But he managed to crowd into a few days luncheons at the National Liberal Club, at the Mansion House, and at Ambassador Reid's, and a dinner at the House of Commons. On his one Sunday he went to St. Paul's in the morning and spoke in the evening at Dr. F. B. Meyer's church.

He was off to Boulogne on April 11, where a motor car met him for a tour through Normandy and Brittany, and then south to Biarritz, where he had several weeks with his family.

Restless always and wanting to be on the go, he left Biarritz in the middle of May on an amazing motor flight to Germany in which he covered seven hundred and eighty-seven miles in three days. We have his itinerary, the strenuousness of which only those who have attempted a similar journey can realize. The first day he had lunch at Périgueux, spent two hours in the Haviland potteries at Limoges, and passed the night at the Hôtel Moderne at Châteauroux. The second day he went *via* Bourges (where he sent several dozen postcards of the cathedral to friends) and Troyes (more postcards) to Châlons-sur-Marne, and spent the night at the Hôtel de la Haute Mère de Dieu. The third day took him through Verdun and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Ems, where on the evening of May 19 he received the first wireless message from the station on his New York store.

One would be inclined to believe that no man could travel so fast and do anything else but travel. How could he see, much less take in, anything *en route*? But this was not the case with John Wanamaker. A dozen times we have come across allusions in his speeches and Sunday-school talks and little editorials to things that he could only have seen dur-

ing those three days; for he never traveled that route before or after. And in a little package of envelopes, calling cards, hotel bills, postcards, circulars, and guide-books collected on that trip, which we found in his files, epigrams in lead pencil are jotted down. There were several newspapers, the reason for preserving which we did not realize until we saw sentences in his familiar hand all along the margins. This package was labeled, "For Bethany." We give some of these epigrams to illustrate how the Sunday-school superintendent came by his terse and homely expression of thoughts that used to make an abiding impression upon those who listened to him and which were the preliminary practice of years for the editorials written during the last decade of his life. Taken at random are these:

Sin comes in with a laugh and goes out with a cry.

Easier to count twelve mountains than to climb one.

Not easy to hobble a homesick pony.

The white snow often covers deep rifts.

What's the good of a chest of gold if the devil keeps the key?

Like a white mouse in a revolving cage, you can't make the days go fast enough.

A small promise kept is better than a big one forgotten.

In the Holy Land of their innocent hearts.

Her face one high moon of enjoyment.

"After this escapade, I am going to be good and take a cure to fix me for London," he wrote. So we follow him from Ems to the Hotel Alleesaal at Bad Langenschwalbach. On June 28 he arrived in London again and wrote from the Carlton Hotel:

I was driven from the station directly to the Mansion House, where I have been ever since, dining and talking, and I am just through with the manager here in arranging the canceling of my rooms, and am going back to stay with the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. I declined his invitation two or three times, but with the Lady Mayoress united in persuasion, I surrendered.

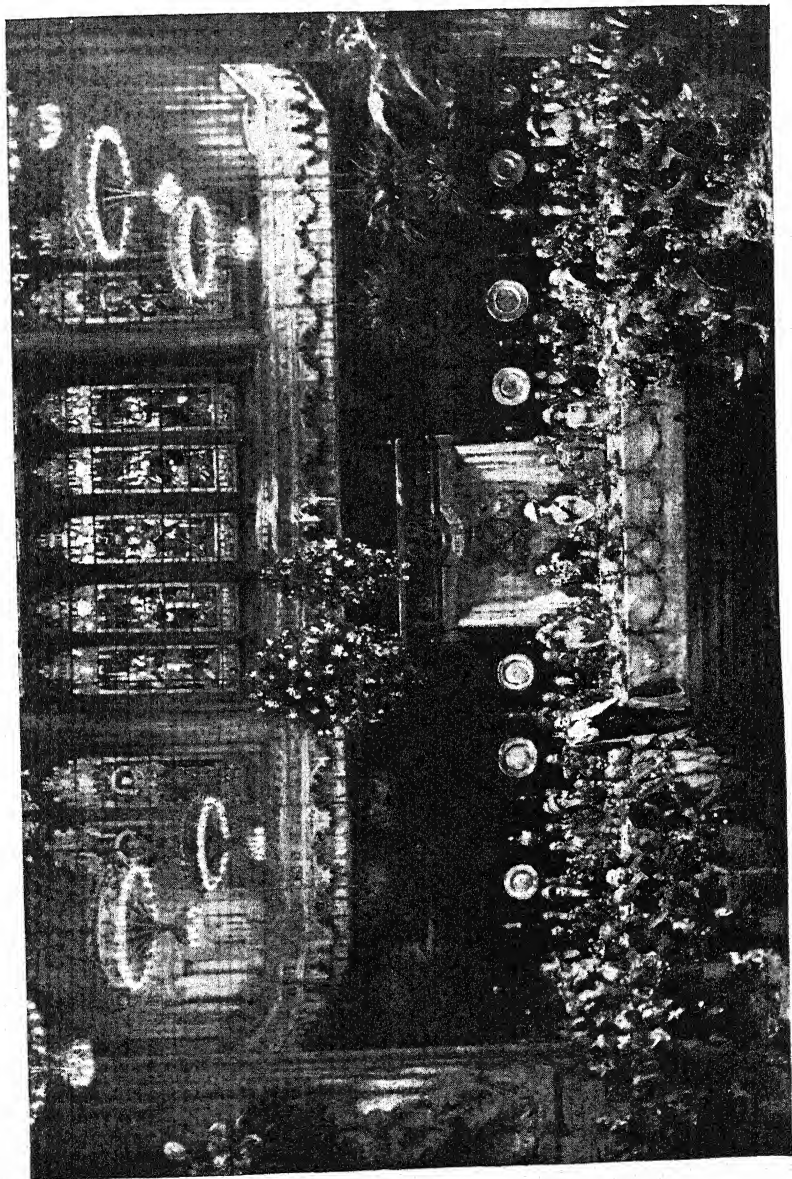
It was a fortunate acceptance of a most unusual invitation, for it enabled Wanamaker to be included in all the official functions of the Coronation week. On the very next morning he accompanied his hosts to the service of national thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral. On the back of the invitation of Dean Inge, which served as his card of admission, he wrote: "St. Paul's, Section J, close behind King George and the Queen in center of Nave and Transept, June 29, 1911, 10:50 a. m. J. W." After the ceremony he was present at the luncheon given to the King and Queen by the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall, and sat next to his host when the King made the speech of thanks for the royal welcome accorded him.<sup>1</sup> On that evening, after the Mansion House dinner, he put down:

I have left the guests of the evening dinner party on the columned portico, looking at the 100,000 people that in the last hour have passed along viewing the vast illuminations of the Mansion House, Royal Exchange, Bank of England, and other great buildings. The crowds pack the streets from wall to wall, and your eyes cannot see to the end of the people, looking at them either way. I was at St. Paul's for the morning, the Guildhall banquet until 3:30, and then here to afternoon tea, and afterward to our office and back to a dinner of about 24. To-morrow I go to the Crystal Palace, where the King meets 100,000 children, and at night to Lord Strathcona's dinner, Dominion Club probably.

Both the Crystal Palace and the Strathcona dinner were notable events for Wanamaker. At the Crystal Palace the Lord Mayor presented him to the King and Queen. He wrote:

The presentation took place at the throne prepared for the coronation celebration at the Crystal Palace, which I have known and loved so long.

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker commissioned an artist to paint the reception at the Guildhall, which was to be his gift to the city of London. It took over ten years to complete the canvas, and was not finished until the autumn of 1922, shortly before the donor's death. It now hangs in the City Corporation art museum. See below, p. 462 and footnote.



LUNCHEON OF THE CITY OF LONDON TO KING GEORGE AND QUEEN MARY AT THE GUILDHALL, CORONATION WEEK, 1911  
Photograph of painting by S. J. Solomon, commissioned by John Wanamaker, and given by him to the City of London.  
It now hangs in the Guildhall



I did not realize that I was to be presented. And after the Lord Mayor had introduced me to King George, the King introduced me to his consort. In our brief conversation I was impressed with the King's splendid common sense and with the Queen's balance and capacity to act as the helpmate to a sovereign. The King seemed to know that I had been staying with the Lord Mayor.

It was not a dinner given by Lord Strathcona that Wanamaker attended, but a much more important event. The Dominion Club was celebrating the Coronation at the Imperial Institute. Lord Strathcona was presiding, and he had invited the American merchant to sit at the table of honor. After his return home, Wanamaker told S. S. McClure:

"It was more of a Canadian dinner than anything, for while princes and rajahs from India and other dignitaries were about representing all the empire, yet the whole trend of the dinner showed the vitality of Canada in a marvelous way. The room was full of electricity. I hardly expect to sit at a table again such as that. At Strathcona's right was the Duke of Connaught, who is now Governor General of Canada. Next to him was the Archbishop of Canterbury. Sir Wilfred Laurier was on the other side of me. Then there was Cromer, famous in Egypt, Lord Minto, a previous Governor General of Canada, Sir Joseph Ward of Australia and all that set of people. Strathcona was the commanding figure of it all. One might have called him the Gladstone of the hour."<sup>1</sup>

The evening in the midst of Canadians and Canada boosters bore fruit; for when he was interviewed on the steamer on his return to New York he had in his hand pamphlets about Canada, and gave them to the reporters, with the statement that Canada offered great opportunities to Americans. "They are already going there from the

<sup>1</sup> When McClure commented that Strathcona had had "a most marvelous career—his years in Labrador—always buy and never sell," Wanamaker quickly interpolated, "That wouldn't do for a storekeeper, would it?"

South and from the West, and there is no longer any need to tell our young men to go west. They can go north. Canada is a great field for them."

Another lasting impression of the Dominion Club dinner, which remained with him to the end of his life and to which he often referred, was the sight of Lord Strathcona at the age of ninety-two, nearly twenty years his senior, presiding at a great dinner and making a speech. If the Canadian pioneer and financier could stay young for more than twenty years after his threescore-and-ten, could not Wanamaker look forward to many more years of active life? He had returned to London at the end of June, hardy and browned by his motor trips and walks at Biarritz and the Prussian baths. The thought of Strathcona made him more amenable to the pleas of his family and the advice and warning of his doctors than he had been before. He said, laughingly, "Isn't it amazing for a fellow who has been more or less of a lame duck all his life to begin to feel that he ought to take a little care of himself only when he is seventy-three?"

An intimate glimpse of life at the Mansion House is given in a letter written on Sunday morning:

A large goose with a small goose quill begins this letter putting the ink on paper after the fashion of the ancient fathers who first lived in these old halls. And my hand will stretch out not to a blotter, but to the sand shaker. Breakfast is over, and the Bow Bells are ringing for church. We 3—the Lord Mayor and her Ladyship and myself—have a 15 minute walk together to church and under these gray clouds.

And on Monday he wrote:

Lunching with the Earl of Kintore, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Australia, and other notables such as the Earl Crawford, Lord this and Lord that. At noon to-day I went with the Bearer of the Mace and the Bearer of the Sword in their wooolsacks and the Lord Mayor robed, in the State carriage, all gorgeous in gold, to a high function in the Guild-

hall, where the livery men, Aldermen, and Sheriffs in their costumes were gathered. Were I to stay here, from present appearances I would not have an idle moment for all July. Ambassador and Mrs. Reid's invitation for a reception to-morrow has come. I can't go, as there is a function here at the same hours.

The American function to which he referred was the Fourth of July celebration. Wanamaker was not in London to celebrate American independence that year. He recorded that he "tramped around and taxicabbed all the morning of the Fourth with our London office men, looking at 9 different sets of rooms for offices. Then I dropped in at the Carlton Club, where I met Earl Roslyn, the Duchess of Sutherland's brother. He looks like her." In the afternoon there was another big Coronation reception with "the Mansion House full all over," and in the evening he went to his "big last Coronation dinner at the Fish Mongers' Hall with the Lord Mayor."

One Coronation experience tended to strengthen his belief in the organ as the instrument of par excellence for use in a great building. Elaborate preparations had been made at St. Paul's to offer to the King and Queen the best English music. A carefully selected orchestra had been long in training for the Coronation. The work of six British subjects was presented, beginning with Bridge's triumphal march and ending with Elgar's Coronation march, written for the occasion, conducted in each case by the composer. At its best English music lacks color and emotion when rendered by an orchestra. In huge St. Paul's the strings were sometimes lost, the wood winds thinned out, and the drums echoed on the sustained rolls. Although he was in a receptive mood, and could generally be made enthusiastic as easily as a child, Wanamaker was deeply disappointed in the music. He said nothing of it, of course, to his hosts or other English friends. But he has left on

record that when they have another coronation, even if they go to Germany or France for their music, the British ought not to attempt an orchestra in St. Paul's. "I think every piece that was rendered would have been so much better on the organ," he wrote.

In his first trips to Europe Wanamaker was faithful to the Cunard line, but he discovered in the 1890's that the new German steamers were better run and had better food. So for years he traveled on the liners of the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd. He was quick to go back to English ships, upon the recommendation of his buyers, when the White Star line, spurred on by German competition, offered a better service than her continental rivals. After Coronation week he returned to New York on the maiden voyage of the *Olympic*, celebrating his seventy-third birthday on board the day before landing.

The hospitality he had received and the attention paid him in London had been most flattering. It tended to strengthen the conviction he had long cherished of community of ideals and interests between the British Empire and the United States—an excellent preparation for the test that was soon to come. Wanamaker was an ardent believer in the world mission of the United States and in the possibility of an inclusive international understanding. It was about this time that he urged his fellow-countrymen to travel, and asked:

Are not the peoples of the whole world drawing nearer together to-day in bonds of better understanding and in a disposition of good will to each other? Should not every American, traveling abroad, go prepared to represent in the best manner possible the fine spirit of the United States, in its good will and good wishes for all the peoples of every nation upon the earth?

Years before he was signally honored in London, he had emphasized the peculiarly intimate relationship between his

country and Great Britain—a family relationship that brought us closer together, with our common language and blood, than we could ever hope to be with continental European nations.<sup>1</sup> At the Christian Endeavor Convention in Liverpool in 1899, at the end of his address, he had provoked wild enthusiasm by taking with each hand the folds of the American and British flags at the sides of the speakers' stand, bringing them up before him, and kissing them. Three years later, after returning from his 1902 trip, he told his Bible Union:

On the ship coming over at one of the evening entertainments slips were handed out with the words of "God save the King" on one side and "America" on the other. The question was which to sing. Sing them together, was my suggestion; jumble them up; the countries are united. And the people did. It showed the state of the feeling.

And the year before King George's coronation, in his address to the delegates of the International Sunday-school Convention at Washington, Wanamaker declared that the ideals and culture of the English-speaking peoples were of prime importance and benefit to the whole world and that this was the reason for promoting all forms of Anglo-American co-operation in religious teaching. He concluded: "With our British brethren we cry, 'God save the King,' and our British delegates, brothers and sisters, are at one with us in shouting, 'God save the children!'"

As he became interested in the international aspect of Y. M. C. A. and Sunday-school work, Wanamaker realized that his particular type of religious work and effort had support in other parts of the world only in English-speaking countries. British and American delegates or representatives made up more than ninety per cent of the participants in so-called "world's conventions" and "international" reli-

<sup>1</sup> In a campaign speech in 1898 he said: "Though we sell goods made in almost every country on the globe, we have never found it necessary to employ any but English-speaking people."

gious and semi-religious organizations. It was the same with the Salvation Army. Seeing that church affairs played a vital part in his life and occupied most of his time outside of business, it was natural that he should come to feel, as years went on, the unique affinity between the English-speaking peoples. Because he spoke no other language than English and was opposed to continental customs—especially the continental Sunday—his social contacts abroad were largely with Englishmen and Scotchmen, who understood—if they did not always actually share—his attitude and his prejudices. And although his firm did more business with the Continent than with Great Britain, the particular lines offered by British manufacturers—such as men's clothing and furnishings—were those through which he had risen to the front rank as a merchant and with which he was therefore most competent to deal.

These facts kept him from feeling in any sense an outsider when he was a guest at the Mansion House and a participant in the ceremonies and celebrations centered around the coronation of King George V. And while he was attending the Coronation, the occasion was celebrated in his new Philadelphia store. Before an immense gathering, at the very moment the ceremony started in Westminster Abbey, the grand organ was first played. There was appropriate Coronation music, a display by the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute cadets of historic English flags, and a solemn salute to the Union Jack.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

WE left Wanamaker, the business man, emerging victorious from the panic of 1907 and sounding almost alone the note of optimism in New York during the long and painful 1908 aftermath; and turned to country life at Lindenhurst, his Masonic adventures, and later European holidays, culminating in the Coronation celebration in London. Now we must go back and pick up the threads of his business life that lead to the Golden Jubilee.

The panic was hardly over when the thought came to the seventy-year-old merchant that his active career as head of the great establishment ought to come to an end. In the early part of 1908 he put down in his diary:

Certain and sure it is that we must get some strong helpers, else after reorganization now quite in my power to make I shall retire partially or entirely. I love work—love it—but I don't think I should be bound up to the task that gives such little liberty for rest and recreation. I do not expect Mr. Ogden or T. B. W. back again in the business. Neither of them seems to have the health. This leaves R. and myself. I am thinking hard how to arrange it and shall do so as soon as ever I can.

This is the only passage in which a definite intention to retire is announced. Elsewhere we find only the occasional expression of the longing to be at other things—with all his time at his own disposal. Ever since his India experience, Wanamaker had wanted to travel in out-of-the-way corners of the world, to travel leisurely, with no thought of business calling him home. He dreamed; he planned—as we all do. His family and friends encouraged the

thought of a trip round the world, and after that devotion to church work and public service. They felt that no man had better earned the right to do what he wanted to do.

But what did he really want to do? Could a man of his temperament live happily and usefully "retired"? Experience had taught him that every time he got away from business he wanted to get back. Every time he came back he said that he had been away too long, and he was supremely happy—the expression is not too strong—in putting on the harness again. In business he never felt old. Long after he was seventy he wrote:

When I look back to the beginning, it does not seem a long time nor do I know how to make myself feel old. I think I am quite as young as I was twenty years ago; and I am sure that I have more capacity to do many things than I had when I was fifty. I have grown with my business, and the strength and power have been mine through God's will as the business increased. No man is old when he is measuring up to opportunities. No man is old who welcomes responsibilities.

It was not with the spirit of a martyr, resigned to doing an irksome duty, then, that John Wanamaker put away all thought of retiring when his son Thomas died, and started afresh on a new stage in his business life (more useful and more successful than any of the earlier stages) that was to last uninterruptedly for nearly fifteen years longer. In the son that remained he found joy and comfort—and something to worry about. He recorded that his own health was perfect, and that he was needed because Rodman could not "be in two places at once—I must take the other place." It is amusing and touching to see how father and son each thought that the other was overworking, and how each was inspired to do great things for the other's sake. The son and his associates believed that John Wanamaker ought to take things easy. John Wanamaker, with the sense of loyalty that was his dominant characteristic, believed that he

could not desert his people. His conviction of their dependence upon him was his fountain of eternal youth. It was not an illusion, but a reality which was with him as long as he lived.

As an illustration of the motive force that kept John Wanamaker working vigorously, fruitfully, and happily, what he wrote on July 7, 1908, is worth quoting:

Now that all business is so perplexing in its failure to resume in sales and give me the usual receipts of cash, it will take me longer to do what I want before I am willing to put an ocean between me and the work here. I am standing over every detail in New York and supervising Philadelphia. I shall not leave.

And he did not leave. The son managed the business in Philadelphia. The father spent most of his time in New York, where he literally did what is written above. The elder Wanamaker's interest in the Philadelphia store was for more than two years chiefly confined to the completion of the new building. Wanamaker enjoyed his New York life intensely. There were the week-ends at Lindenhurst, of course, and the busy Sundays at Bethany; but for five days each week he lived at the Hotel Plaza, and became a familiar figure in Central Park, where he took his early morning walk. He knew the squirrels and the birds, and always exchanged greetings with early canterers on the bridle path. Central Park had not yet been spoiled by automobiles, and it reminded him of Lindenhurst. As nature was not associated with solitude in his mind—he loved people—he was able to write in Central Park:

Thoughts are children of the mind and heart playing at home on the doors of our souls. Out of the sky they come, and up from the ground, to bless us. The soft touch of the summer wind is a thoughtful kiss of health, and the long walk through the woods and the exercise of the body and the smell of the trees is a boon and benediction upon body and soul.

This silent hour with happy thoughts is a restorative without a doctor's prescription. An early morning walk through Central Park is what some wise men take every morning before breakfast.

Just as eagerly he went down to business, looking forward with zest to the day's work because he had "a store that truly serves the people before it considers any other matter whatever," and because he felt that "a breath of music with the chimes of the organ bells of our business house is also a good start for the day."

So completely did he find his place under the new conditions and so essential was the part he played in leading on the new path to prosperity during the years following the panic that we find him gleefully recording, in the bold free hand that his writing took when he was, as he put it, "bubbling over":

I must say nobody is talking Europe to me just now. R. speaks about going away "somewhere." The Mother urges 2 weeks at Hot Springs immediately to prepare for the winter work. Dr. Tyson says "wait a little and see how you get along." So I am gladly on "the waiting bench."

And on another occasion, although he had been anticipating a trip abroad, he confessed:

Dear me, but I am reluctant to take the first decisive step to make preparations for going to a ship. There is so much here that I must see to.

In the autumn of 1910, however, places were shifted. John Wanamaker returned to Philadelphia, and Rodman Wanamaker took up his residence in New York. The father had come home from Europe, and had noticed that the son was becoming more and more interested in New York. On the other hand, the last section of the new building in Philadelphia was ready to be opened, which meant the fulfillment of Wanamaker's most cherished

dream. It was fitting that he should preside in his own business temple. And he was worried over his wife's health. He gave up his lease at the Plaza—with regret, as the diary shows, but without too much regret. It was always that way with Wanamaker. What was ahead of him fascinated him. Throughout his life he was able to preserve the precious childlike quality of concentrating on the next thing and of enjoying the law of compensation without trying to analyze it.

The next thing was the Golden Jubilee—the celebration of fifty years in business, coinciding with the completion of the new Philadelphia store. In preparation for the festivities Wanamaker was urged to go away for a long time. The old project of a trip to Japan was revived. But although his wife's health had improved (it was that consideration which made him abandon the Far East in 1910), he did not go. To himself he explained: "This store is too much like a new toy for me to think of leaving for so long." In February he was a week-end guest of President and Mrs. Taft at the White House, and attended the midwinter dinner of the Gridiron Club of which he wrote:

At 7:30 the President and I went to the Gridiron dinner. The Club is composed of 40 newspapermen, and their 400 guests were Senators, Cabinet officers and Congressmen and officials of the departments. It was far away and above any Club or society dinner I ever attended and was better conducted by its chairman. I sat by Justice McKenna of the Supreme Court and next to him was Vice-President Sherman, who was next to the president of the Gridiron with Taft on his right. Part of the time I was seated between McKenna and Sherman, both of whom I knew well. I saw the few that were left of the men that were there in my time. It was after 12 when President Taft made the closing speech and we came back to the White House and talked for an hour. I am in the Lincoln Room, where we met for the Cabinet in Harrison's time.

Friends and employees in New York arranged a celebration of the "half-century milestone" on March 1, 1911.

Letters and telegrams came in, and Wanamaker received the congratulations "in the dressed-up store of dressed-up people, smiling and speaking their pride in my old age." To his son Rodman, who was in Philadelphia that day, he wrote:

I find my office embellished with a huge horseshoe of daffodils. I am told the store is decorated throughout. After I finish my mail, I shall make a tour. The day is bright and memories of fifty years are crowding upon me.

I see again the first morning when I swept the shavings and blocks that were about the front door, before the doors were opened on that 12th day of March, 1877. And the procession of the years before that, beginning at Oak Hall with its little square box of a store, and that old cash book which you saw on Monday and which I kept myself and the subsequent years of happy labor and continual enjoyment; your brother Thomas coming into the business and beginning in the basement taking off the lids of boxes of merchandise and checking up the bills; your own coming after your graduation and early marriage; the rapid extensions of the old Grand Depot building into its splendid form. It was splendid. We built a business without a proper home! Then the establishment of our offices in Paris and your own large part in that work; the years of study for the new building which we have just completed; and the steps along the way in our New York branch; and the splendid equipment in both cities for still larger things.

All these things fill me not only with wonder, but with great thanksgiving that I have been permitted to toil so long and that I was enabled to trust that wisdom might be wrought into the foundations for something to remain when my years are over. The largest thing in my eyes and heart this morning is the sense of the goodness of the Heavenly Father to have permitted me to live to see so much of His hand of love toward me in the things that are surrounding me to-day.

A fortnight later the Philadelphia store celebrated. On March 14, 1911, the diary says:

Yesterday was the most wonderful of all the days in the old store. The people showed more of their heart to me than ever before. 880 of the Phila. staff sat down to breakfast at 5 minutes of 8—the Boy Cadets 350 strong escorted by their Military Band of 40 and the Girls' Bugle

Yesterday was the most wonderful  
of all the days in the old store  
The people showed more of their  
heart to me than ever before

8 of the Phila staff only - sat down to  
breakfast at five minutes to 8 - the  
Boy Cadets 250 strong escorted by  
their Military Band of 40 + the Girl  
Bangle Corps flanked the tables

We sat down to the organ, Chimes  
Jubilee Bilt flag to the  
Cadet Color guard  
Had a short  
breakfast and  
beautifully -  
they came fresh  
the first one to  
present the



We were through at 9.30 + all were  
dry Sunday clothes organ I went about a little  
here were two <sup>many</sup> <sup>Callan</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>floor</sup>

Corps flanked the tables. As we took our places the organ chimes pealed. The short breakfast was beautifully served—then came speeches. The Cadet Color Guard presented the Jubilee Silk Flag. We were through at 9:30 and all wore our Sunday clothes. I went about a little. There were too many callers for me to stay on the floor.

These were in the nature of preliminary celebrations—to mark the anniversary month—which was always held in March. Wanamaker went abroad in the spring. His experiences at the coronation of King George we have already given. When he returned in midsummer, the great organ, which he had bought seven years before at the St. Louis Exposition, was installed in the Grand Court of the Philadelphia building, and he heard it for the first time.<sup>1</sup> To adjust the business to the new facilities afforded by greatly increased space in Philadelphia put all thought of a more formal celebration of the jubilee and of the dedication of the Philadelphia store out of his mind for the time being. And he wanted to wait until all his people had returned from their vacations. There was still some anxiety, also, as to business conditions. We remember that in 1907 the panic came just after the opening of the new building in New York, and that there had not been a return to normal economic life since then. On August 22, 1911, Wanamaker wrote:

Business generally is very lifeless and the certainty of a revision of the tariff by the next Congress meeting first of December will unsettle manufacturers, merchants and consumers. America for the last few years has kept in an upset condition from panic, trust, corporation and tariff fits.

It was not that the business was falling off. On the contrary, both stores were doing well. But the burnt child dreaded the fire. Just as he had given the New York store in 1907 stocks worthy of its new and larger home, he was intent upon making the jubilee year Christmas season

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 215.

in Philadelphia one that would be noteworthy above all for the merchandise offered. The great home he had built for his business added to his opportunities—but it also added to his responsibilities. When the winter business plans were completed, and not until then, was he ready for a festival in honor of the fiftieth anniversary.

The store celebration was held on the evening of October 26, 1911, when six thousand five hundred employees marched through the Grand Court before the reviewing stand. There was a pageant whose exhibits were symbolic of the history of the store and city. It was exclusively a family affair. The public was not admitted. But the children and grandchildren of John Wanamaker were present, and a special train brought a representative group from the New York store, with the Seventh Regiment Band.

The marching song was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," which did not seem in any way incongruous to the man who was being honored. He had always regarded his business as an expression of his religion. He did not divorce the two in thought or action; and he said so, giving his reason. To him a man's religion was his life. Business or whatever activity one engaged in was simply an opportunity for Christian living.

With this thought in mind, when he accepted as a jubilee gift of his store family a deed to the land on which his birthplace stood, the idea came to him instantly to use it for some charitable purpose. And when the Jubilee Book, with the signatures of thirteen thousand employees at home and abroad, was presented to him, he said that he bore on his heart above all things connected with the business the welfare and well-being of all who worked with him "in the service of the public."

In the spring of 1911 the *Dry Goods Economist* gave a gold medal to Wanamaker in recognition of his unique

services to retail merchandising during fifty years.<sup>1</sup> If he appreciated any event of the jubilee year, outside the testimonials of his own people, it was the luncheon of New York merchants in honor of his jubilee on November 16, 1911, when the proprietors and managers of other general stores in the city presented him with a loving cup. Competition among the larger merchants in New York was keen; but they all recognized that Wanamaker had rendered unique service in setting high standards of business dealing, in his pioneering in advertising and merchandising, and, above all, by raising in public esteem the calling of the merchant through his own worth and personality. Responding to the greetings of his fellow-merchants, Wanamaker expressed the belief that fraternity and not rivalry was the spirit in New York; made a plea for the reduction of telegraph, cable, and express charges and for the establishment of the parcels post;<sup>2</sup> and declared that merchants should study "how to reduce the high cost of living." In emphasizing this last point he heralded the economic problem that was coming to the front and created the slogan for the next decade in economics as he did the following year in politics when, in seconding the renomination of Taft, he spoke of "safeguarding the Constitution."

During the jubilee year Wanamaker wrote much about his experiences abroad, as we have seen, and made many speeches in the various celebrations in Philadelphia and New York, in which he reviewed the fifty years in graphic detail. Of his reminiscences we have made use in many

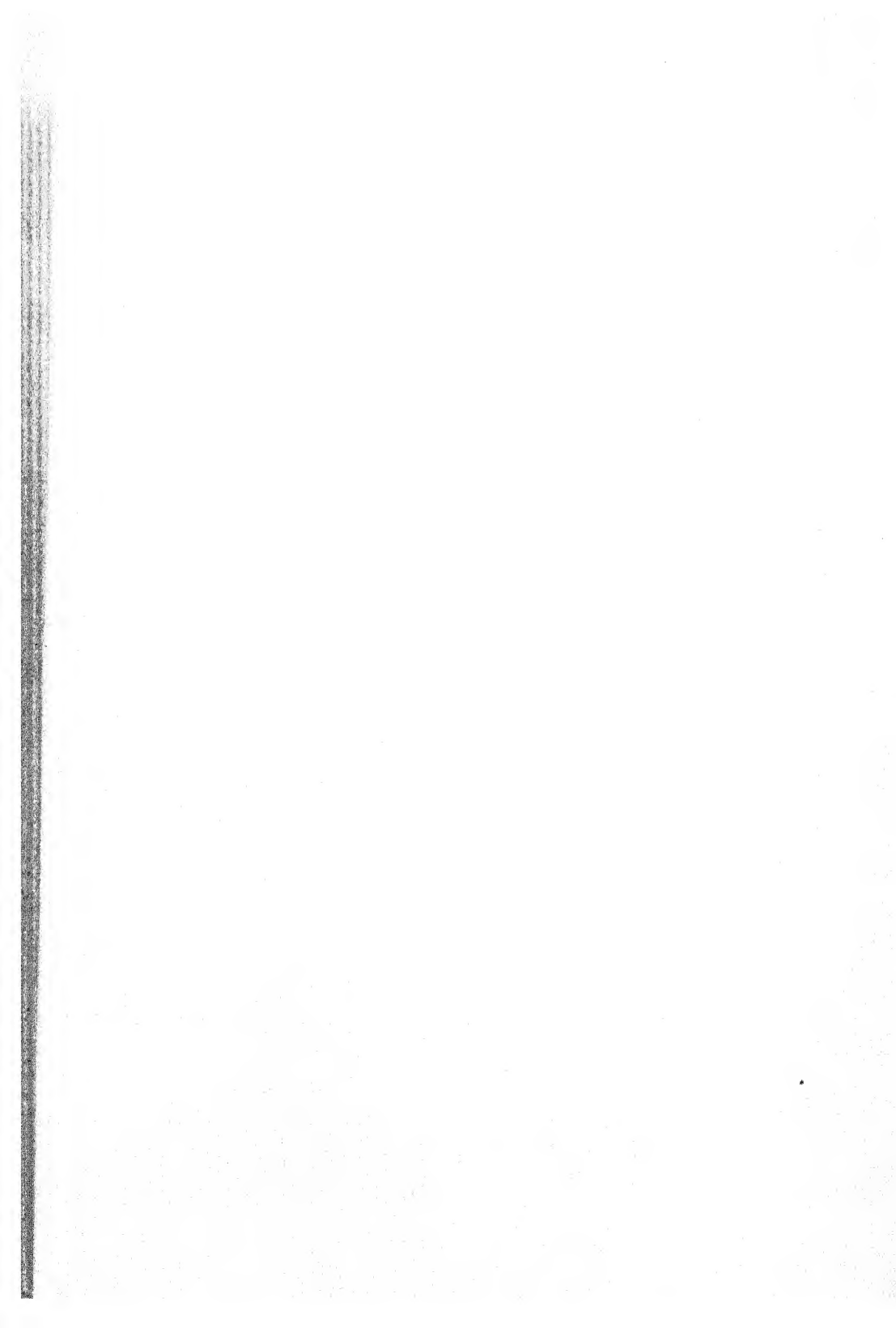
<sup>1</sup> The face of this medal, designed by Frank C. Higgins, president of the New York Numismatic Society, showed Mercury, god of commerce; the reverse carried five medallions, representing progress, originality, thought, talent, and energy. In presenting the medal, Mr. A. C. Pearson said: "Mr. Wanamaker has infused his spirit into the active operations of his business as has perhaps no other man. There is not a counter in the store or an advertisement in a paper that is not permeated with his ideas and individuality."

<sup>2</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 280-292.



*(Photo. by Dülirkoop)*

IN NEW YORK IN 1912



places in our story of Wanamaker's life. But he was singularly reticent, for a man of his years, in expressing publicly or in his intimate writings how the recognition of his achievements—and the achievements themselves—made him feel. He came nearest to revealing his thoughts in the letter to his son from which we have quoted above. But we find two indications that give us a clue as to the attitude of the man of seventy-three, still in the full vigor of life and floodtide of success. On the jubilee year birthday, July 11, 1911, when he was returning from Europe to receive the honors awaiting him and to enter into the possession of the completed Philadelphia store, there are eight words only on the page: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us."

And on Christmas Eve, just a week before the President of the United States was coming to bring him the congratulations of the nation and to dedicate the new store, he wrote that he was standing in the Grand Court, crowded with belated shoppers, listening to the Christmas carols. He described the feeling that came over him when they sang, "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem," which was written by his old friend Phillips Brooks. "I said to myself that I was in a temple—but may I never say, 'I built it!'"

Confronted with the fulfillment of his dreams, the overwhelming sensation was that of humility.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE NEW HOME OF THE PHILADELPHIA STORE

IN conversations with visitors of all kinds about all sorts of things during the years immediately following the completion of the new Philadelphia store, Wanamaker never failed to mention safety from fire as the outstanding feature of the building. In August, 1914, for instance, we find him saying:

You are now on the eighth floor of this store, and if a fire were to break out, you would be a great deal safer than on the first floor. I can take you in half a minute into a brick tower that starts from the rock foundation and goes to the roof, with staircases and story floors of solid stone. Fifteen thousand people can keep moving down in each one of those towers that you can't go on this floor to any place without being in one minute's reach of. The towers are smoke proof, and there is no need of crowding or pushing anywhere at any time.

The recurrence of this topic indicates the relief Wanamaker felt at being free from the fear of a holocaust in the haphazard group of buildings that had been his Philadelphia store. Knowing that a fire in the daytime might entail loss of life among shoppers and employees, he had devoted himself, from the first days of the expansion of the Grand Depot, to the study of fire-prevention appliances. He had always been ready to listen to any proposition to make his building safer, and he had gone out of his way to investigate inventions he had read or heard about and new devices that he saw advertised. His employees had thorough instruction in fire drills. His people had fig-

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ured out that while fire was always possible, a calamity resulting from it could not happen. He accepted expert opinion, of course, because there was nothing else to do; but he was never comfortable in his mind about the matter.

When he began to do business in the Stewart building in New York, the desire to have a new building in Philadelphia was increased. A few months later came the great Philadelphia fire of 1897, which started opposite Wanamaker's and consumed a great many buildings on Market Street. It spread to the clock tower corner of the Wanamaker store before it was checked. The fire had occurred in the early morning. Wanamaker was assured that there would have been no panic had it broken out in shopping hours. But a recent horrible panic after a fire in Paris, which had shocked the whole world, was in his mind. He decided to build a fireproof structure covering the whole block.<sup>1</sup> The problems to be faced and solved were tremendous. It was going to take years to plan, and more years to erect, a new store. The Philadelphia merchant had recently entered the New York field; he was still an active factor in politics; and in his business he was confronted by administrative and merchandising problems that challenged the best that was in him. The idea of one great building had to take form slowly.

It was not a new idea. We find in the *Public Ledger* of May 20, 1885:

<sup>1</sup> He put down as the first of the nine things he had in mind in the proposed new building: "To insure safety for all comers so far as human power avails." His responsibility for the well-being and safety of every person under the Wanamaker roof was a fact he impressed upon architects, builders, and his own people throughout the ten years. When the building was dedicated he gave as reason for his belief that "not another such mercantile building exists to-day anywhere in the world," and that "the dream of its founder and his sons is fulfilled," this fact, which he put first: "Sanitary appointments and safeguards from fire or disaster have been most carefully provided for as far as is humanly possible."

At present it is the intention of Mr. John Wanamaker to alter the buildings he has acquired for the purposes of his business, according to the general plan adopted with the houses on the Chestnut Street front. Eventually it is expected that a new and grand building will cover the whole lot, of an architectural style suitable for an establishment of such magnitude.

Harrison's call upon Wanamaker for national service took four years; and then Pennsylvania politics and expansions in New York came along. But after he returned from Washington in 1893, the father had been told by his son Thomas that the greatest thing he could do for the business would be to work out a plan for an adequate building unit, which could be erected in sections, so as to prevent interruption in the business and at the same time make financing easier. The elder Wanamaker left no doubt in his son's mind that he was ready to go ahead with the building of the new store as soon as the engineering difficulties that seemed to stand in the way of tall buildings were solved. The structural steel and concrete industries were still in the experimental stage.

So accustomed are we to the present-day aspect of American cities, with their skyscrapers, that it is not easy to put ourselves back thirty years. In the spring of 1893, after he had returned to private life, Wanamaker took a long trip through the West. Studying store buildings was on his mind. This we know from his notes and letters. He was especially interested in what Chicago was doing in office buildings and hotels as well as in stores; and at the World's Fair he was attracted by architectural exhibits of Budapest and Buenos Aires, where larger permanent public structures for municipal use were being planned than then existed in any city in the United States. In visiting the principal cities of our own country he had found no building anywhere that could be used as a model—or could furnish

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an idea—for the Wanamaker store. The only store building that combined space and utility with elegance was the A. T. Stewart building in New York, which Wanamaker himself bought three years later.

In writing of the conception and execution of Wanamaker's plan to house the greatest retail business in America in an adequate building under one roof, we must bear in mind the fact that there was no precedent. When Wanamaker was casting about for a solution of his problem, the type of great building which is the commonplace of American city life to-day was not yet regarded as practicable and feasible by structural engineers. Nothing like the floor space he had in mind was provided by any building. No one had blue-printed the elevator system of which he dreamed. The plan he decided upon and carried to fruition after a continuous struggle of nine years was as great a pioneering feat as any that he ever attempted.<sup>1</sup> In steel and stone he erected an enduring witness to the qualities that made him great. It reflects his will, his taste, his sense of values and proportion, his genius for display, his idea of what constitutes quality, and his craving for light. The building itself we shall not attempt to describe. That has no place in the biography. It is enough to say that it is a monument worthy of the man. But how he built it, during the years that were his most notable years as a merchant and a man, is of vital interest.

That grown-ups are still children is shown by our matter-of-fact acceptance of what we use and enjoy. We walk into great stores and other buildings that are towering bee-

<sup>1</sup> The proof of this statement is not difficult to adduce. We have the store that Marshall Field built (he consulted the same architect) at the very time John Wanamaker was starting his building. The Field store is cut up into three separate units, under three roofs. The idea of having a single building had been under consideration—and was abandoned—by Field, because of technical difficulties and the uncertain expense, in 1902, just when Wanamaker was about to break ground for his new store.

hives, looking upon what they give us in comfort and æsthetic satisfaction as things we have always had. We do not wonder how we got along before we had them, nor do we think to pay the tribute that is due to the master minds and the thousands of hands that toiled to bestow on us so great a benefit. Accustomed as we are to things as they are, we do not go back to other days. Thus are we insensible to change. Thus have we a narrow and grotesque idea of achievement.

The old Wanamaker store was bizarre to look upon. Its Chestnut Street frontage, creation of expediency, did not look queer and ugly only because it harmonized with the other blocks and buildings on Chestnut Street. For this reason—that it was the same everywhere else—the thousand and one inconveniences to employees and shoppers are inconveniences only in retrospect. Everybody thought Wanamaker's was wonderful because it was ahead of its day. Withal, the old store had its undeniable *cachet*. Because it had grown and evolved gradually, there was nothing monotonous about the place. It was full of charming nooks. There was intimacy in the aspect of every department. For rugs, bric-à-brac, pictures, and furniture, the atmosphere was just right.

The owner's first problem we might call one of transmigration of the soul. He had founded the store. He had watered as well as planted. And now, when he proposed to do away with the old body, he had to think how the personality of the business—so wholly himself—that permeated the ever-changing buildings could be transferred from wood and plaster to steel and concrete. He wanted high ceilings for ventilation and light. He wanted vast floor space to meet the demands of a business that had grown beyond his dreams. He wanted exits and safety stairways and great doors, such as he had seen on the latest

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transatlantic liners, that would shut off instantly a threatened part of the new building. No matter how high he decided to build, he wanted light from above coming down through a central well that would bring the sun into the heart of the store.

But if low ceilings, different levels, rambling aisles, and *passerelles* were done away with, what would happen to the intimacy, the nothing-like-it-anywhere-elseness, the specialty shop look of Wanamaker's? The answer was obvious. The greatest care was going to be required to make the new building express the founder. Of the technical problems confronting the architect and builder Wanamaker could hope to understand little; but he had so to arrange for the new building that from foundation to capstone it would express John Wanamaker. This would mean his personal supervision of the planning and building.

The second problem would be how to keep the business going and growing during the long years of building, and how to do it without serious inconvenience to the every-day life of Philadelphia. The business needed all the space there was; and the Wanamaker block now stood at the heart of Philadelphia, with none too wide streets around it. The quintupled value of the land was not, as some ignorantly assumed, an unearned increment to its owner. Taxes had steadily increased to the point where the overhead consequent upon ownership of the block had itself come to be a serious charge upon the cost of doing business. To the expense of construction had to be added carrying for successive periods of years quarter-sections of the Wanamaker block temporarily withdrawn from use. A resulting congestion in the rest of the premises and the long-continued annoyance to shoppers and hindrance to the delivery service were a risk not lightly to be incurred. If at any time during the operation there were labor difficulties or dearth

of building material, if the hundreds of sub-contractors should fail to do their part, the loss to the man who had initiated so daring a venture might prove stupendous. Nothing like it had ever been attempted in Philadelphia. Of precedents to figure by there were none. On the other hand, there were unknown imponderabilia to reckon with.

But Wanamaker knew that a new building, to banish forever the fear of fire and to expand in, had to come. The principles that had made him pre-eminent among American merchants rendered imperative, sooner or later, a new Wanamaker's. Obstacles had to be overcome, no matter what they were. A way had to be found to do what must be done. Without expansion, stagnation was inevitable. The only way to expand was to rebuild from foundation up. The existing structure had reached the limit of its capacity. Then, too, Wanamaker sensed, with that uncanny prescience of his, the architectural transformation of great cities, where increasing land values would soon take the profit out of business unless steel and concrete and modern engineering came to the aid of the owner of the land. Others would be building in the heart of the city, forced to it, and a way had to be found to build enormous structures without interrupting the normal life of the community. A way had to be found! In his planning, in his figuring, in his dreaming, he did not ask himself, "Shall I do it or shall I not?" There was only one question, "How?"

The third problem was that of financing the project. The records do not show that this worried Wanamaker. He used to say laughingly that he never did worry about money even when he "ought to have." The biographer does not find the statement an exaggeration. Perhaps the great things Wanamaker accomplished are due more to his conviction that if he went ahead the means of doing so would be found than to any other cause. He had his life-

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insurance policies—an asset that had been accumulating for thirty years. He could mortgage his land. If more money were needed, a bond issue could be floated.<sup>1</sup> And his credit was of the kind that he had every reason to believe would not be strained to the breaking point by the most ambitious building enterprise.

In 1899, the year of his North Cape cruise, Wanamaker went to Paris and Berlin to study the new establishments of the Printemps and Tietz. He gathered several pictures of these buildings and also of the *Ménagère* in Paris; and with them he filed his notes and impressions. He had ideas that had been bubbling up inside for years, some suggested by things he had seen elsewhere, others wholly novel. The impracticable he set aside in the process of elimination. But what he thought ought to be done and could be done he did not easily give up or modify. He had to be shown that suggestions were inadvisable. Before he yielded, he had to see that they were too expensive or would not accomplish what he had in mind or were materially impossible of execution. For a layman he was extraordinarily quick at reading a sketch and at getting the idea of a drawing. He knew how to take a pencil and put down in lines what he wished to convey.

Consequently, when the preliminary plans were being made for the new kind of store building to follow, after thirty years, the new kind of store, Wanamaker did not get

<sup>1</sup> The idea of bonds, however, was not an agreeable one. While for any large mortgage, distribution of the amount through mortgage bonds was the natural method of financing, Wanamaker had a curious feeling that bondholders regarded themselves as investors in—and therefore partners in the ownership of—the enterprise they had underwritten. Before the building was completed he did avail himself of a large mortgage bond issue. But Wanamaker never did bond his business for operating capital, unlike most of his competitors; and after the business was incorporated he kept all except qualifying shares of stock in his own and his son's name. His pride of ownership was tremendous, and when he put the capstone on the Philadelphia building he said in his address that the business was owned wholly by himself and his son Rodman.

up a competition or ask a lot of architects to submit their ideas *in toto*. About his building he was with the architects as he had always been with dealers about paintings. He did not go to them for advice as to what he ought to like. The type and size of building, the materials used, the interior arrangement, the adornments—about all these questions he had made up his mind. Even in matters of detail it was not often that he was asked to accept or reject the ideas and tastes of others. He did the suggesting. It was for the architects and engineers to carry them out if at all practicable. When he was in doubt, he did not hesitate to ask for opinions. When he felt he did not know, he sought information and advice before he disclosed what was in his mind. Through all the years of the great undertaking it was he who planned and built the store that is his monument.

By a diligent study of the correspondence we believe that we have established a fact that will surprise most people. One assumes that the Philadelphia Wanamaker store is a conception that sprang fully matured and elaborated out of the mind of the master builder and his assistants, or that it was constructed according to the plans of Burnham, the Chicago architect. It is so convincingly a unit that one feels it must have been built that way. But it was not. Great achievements are never begun and completed in accordance with prearranged plans. One can imitate or copy what already exists. An original creation takes form gradually in travail. The great things done by John Wanamaker needed the spur and inspiration of going along the path of performance, surmounting obstacles, before the goal came into view. John Wanamaker could be counted on to see a project through, no matter what it was, and with success that was often in proportion to the obstacles overcome.

One doubts, however, whether the veteran merchant—

he was already that in 1902—realized the difficulties ahead of him. He certainly never believed that more than two years would pass before the first steel pillar was put in place and that the Chestnut Street doors of the new building would not be opened until the ninth year.

For precaution against fire, for greater cleanliness, and to make possible devoting two stories under the ground wholly to selling space, Wanamaker decided, long before he passed on the outward appearance and interior arrangement of the new building, that the power plant should be in the adjoining block. Land was purchased in the center of the block east of Thirteenth Street, and in October, 1901, the Philadelphia Councils passed an ordinance authorizing a tunnel under Thirteenth Street to the projected power house. This structure went up separately from the Store building. After all these years it remains a model of what a heating and lighting plant for a twentieth-century building should be.

Wanamaker knew that the practicability of the great building for retail merchandising depended largely upon the solution of problems connected with the power house. He had anticipated every conceivable kind of need and provided accordingly. When he pressed the button to start the great dynamos, linked up to enough miles of wiring to encircle the globe, he recalled the period of his experience in electric light and ventilation less than thirty years before, and spoke humourously of how friends who came to his office when the Grand Depot was first made over were impressed with his steam heat, even though it worked only fitfully. "That heating was like my lighting. When it was being praised and when I was told that it was a miracle, I was all the time afraid that it would suddenly die out. Sometimes it did!"

The chronology of the undertaking is in itself eloquent:

- 1902—Ground broken for Market Street section
- 1903—Making plans while excavation continued
- 1904—Framework and masonry of Market Street section begun
- 1905—First section finished; excavations for second section started
- 1906—Market Street section opened
- 1907—Framework and masonry of second section
- 1908—Second section completed; excavation for third section started
- 1909—Second section opened; laying of corner stone, framework and masonry of Chestnut Street section
- 1910—Chestnut Street section completed, and Chestnut Street doors opened in time for Christmas
- 1911—Interior completed; and dedication on December 30

But more eloquent is what we read between the lines—the long story of hope deferred that did not make the heart sick; for nothing could take away John Wanamaker's confidence and buoyant optimism. During the period of the construction of the Philadelphia store Wanamaker put up his new store in New York; he rode the storm of the panic of 1907; and he lost Ogden and his son Thomas. And there were never lacking friends to tell him that he shouldn't and couldn't do what he did.

He was on his way home from India when the first spadeful of earth was turned on Washington's birthday, 1902. On his arrival in Paris he found a letter from Thomas B., who wrote:

I wish you were taking a good cure somewhere and I hope you will before you come back. After you are here three days and a Sunday you will feel as if you had never been away.

But home the father came and got right into the midst of the planning. He resisted the pressure—and powerful it was—brought upon him to engage a Philadelphia architect. He believed that there was one man who had the experience and the vision to help him. Daniel H. Burn-

ham had built the first skyscraper and fireproof building in the United States in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> It was only ten stories high—not as tall as the Ames Building in Boston or the World Building in New York. And it had soon been out-distanced by a number of tall structures in half a dozen American cities. But the reputation of Burnham as past master in the new art of using steel framework with walls of solid stone on concrete foundations did not suffer by the success of his imitators. Wanamaker had first admired his work at the World's Fair of 1893, and he knew that Burnham had been retained for Marshall Field's new store. Philadelphia local pride, and the "strong representations" (as he called them) of Philadelphia and New York friends did not prevent him from going to Chicago for his architect.

Characteristic of both men was the way the plans for the new store were launched. On September 23, 1902, Wanamaker climbed down from his sleeper at Chicago, and went to Burnham's club for breakfast. The two men visited the Art Institute, and Burnham was busy all the time answering Wanamaker's questions. Then Wanamaker told Burnham that he was ready to start building as soon as the plans could be agreed upon and the contracts let. Nothing would do but that Burnham should accompany him to Philadelphia that very day. The next morning Wanamaker had the architect of his choice on the spot, looking over the ground at City Hall Square and Market Street. Sufficient excavating had already been done to allow Burnham to study

<sup>1</sup> Burnham was six years younger than Wanamaker, and he had been a rolling stone until the Chicago fire of 1871 gave him his opportunity. He had failed entrance examinations at both Harvard and Yale, had tried mercantile business without success, and had come back to Chicago from gold-seeking in Nevada without any money in his pocket. But when Wanamaker consulted him he had behind him thirty years of conspicuous success in the architectural profession—success of the kind that appealed to Wanamaker, because it had been won by originality and daring. Burnham's pioneering spirit made him the father of the twentieth-century American city.

the subsoil. He declared that the store could be built in granite, and recommended Maine stone. Wanamaker pressed a button, and in a minute a report on the quality and capacity of all the Maine quarries was in the hands of the surprised Burnham. Wanamaker had had it prepared more than two years before.<sup>1</sup> It was decided to build in granite; Wanamaker indicated what he wanted; and Burnham returned to Chicago with the order to "rush the drawings." After seven weeks he returned with the plans. We take from Burnham's 1902 diary two quotations:

November 18—Burnham, Graham, Anderson, and Wanamaker staff men all day at Wanamaker's. Wanamaker came in before lunch and accepted the work, elevation, and plans of lower part, except as to sections showing the sub-basement, basement, and basement entresol heights. Burnham and Graham lunched with Wanamaker in his private lunch room. Young Wanamaker joined them at lunch. No conversation occurred at lunch regarding details of the building. Young Wanamaker said to his father: "You do the merchandising and I will do the building; otherwise I want nothing to do with it." This was the only reference made to the work in his presence. In the afternoon, the sections of basement were made, submitted to Mr. Wanamaker by Graham, and approved of by Mr. Wanamaker. November 27—Burnham, Ernest Graham, and Pierce Anderson went to Wanamaker's construction department office. Mr. Wanamaker accepted the exterior (Florentine style) with the exception of proposed Chestnut Street doorway, which Burnham was to change. He also accepted the plan, with some slight changes around rear of carriage entrance, said changes to be made that night.

<sup>1</sup> It developed after the first section was completed, however, that either the contract for the granite had been let without careful inspection, or that deliveries had been passed without adequate testing. The ensuing dispute called for the services of a chemist as referee, and led Wanamaker to send a specialist again to investigate the Maine quarries. The granite was tested on the spot for endurance and color of stone. The difficulty all along through the building of the Philadelphia store seemed to be to get enough of the quality needed. In the Gould report, December, 1905, it is stated that a former foreman of the quarry Wanamaker was thinking of using had declared that "it will be impossible to get out enough good clear granite to furnish the Wanamaker building requirements," which, added, Mr. Gould, was "an opinion held by several of the workmen who are equally familiar with the possibilities of this quarry."

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It is evident that the plans did not work out as rapidly and satisfactorily as Wanamaker anticipated. Excavating was slow and costly. Contract bids, once the original specifications were ready, proved in some cases unexpectedly high, and there were some work and materials that none would offer to provide within the time limit or in the way the Wanamaker construction department had it worked out. In the files we discovered a booklet, filled from cover to cover with notes in Wanamaker's own hand, which is a striking revelation of the man's mind. Dated in Chicago, on September 21, 1903, its entries prove that he had gone out there to talk over the plans for the store and to try to speed up the work. They prove, too, that the tentative plans submitted by Burnham a year before had not been definitive and that in many particulars they still had to be changed to embrace ideas to which Wanamaker held tenaciously. Illustrative of the way his mind worked are the epigrams, the comments on the Marshall Field store and policy, and the ever-present question of comfort of his employees, interspersed on almost every page. We shall attempt to condense what is in this booklet:

No one was doing all he could. The building must stand for simplicity, strength, straightforwardness—for "evident strength and economy of space." Two greatest factors—floor space and light. Granite to stand for integrity and strength. "Know what you want; then find how to get it; then get it. A mass of details should not frighten—for a wood-pile dismays only the man who does not want to saw a stick."

He emphasized a tight basement to keep out dust and also especial attention to ventilation. He thought wood in some form was preferable to mosaic tile floor. Harking back to the anxiety that the old flavor of the Wanamaker's he had created and nurtured be not destroyed, he queried: "Why not make special rooms for special stocks all through the store?" He wanted mahogany fronts and double doors both opening simultaneously, for elevators. Five elevators enough in a bank—they were not to be close to the ground floor exit doors anywhere. Forty-one passenger and 9 freight.

Employees on the Seventh floor. 5 floors for manufacturing. Alteration room to be provided with machines run by electricity, with a special motor on the floor. Lockers for employees can be distributed through the store if there is proper policing. North light for sewing. Cold storage to hold "four times as much as Field's and take draperies."

"Furs—we must buy of M. F., fine goods. M. F. frame the pictures they sell, and buy frames ready made for cheap pictures. Send our people to study their china dept. They make their comforters and bedspreads."

"Fourteen story building. Keep upper stories 14 feet high. Three complete interior walls. Consider distribution of different floors."

"All obstacles must give way. Adhering snow falls off into gutters, and not upon the street. Must get all our boiler plant across the street. Must assure plenty of water or have artesian wells. Adding machines." (Here are details of cornices sketched in.)

"Conveniences should be where wanted. List all these." Jewelry along Chestnut Street, where "ceiling should be three feet higher, enriched and carved. Consider again work room of N. Y. Store to give light to those who sew rather than to the carpets."

No apology is needed for this summary. More than anything the biographer could write does it indicate how the great building in Philadelphia is as much John Wanamaker's very own as was the old Grand Depot. It is the embodiment of his ideas.<sup>1</sup> All obstacles did give way. But just before he returned home to guide with his own hand the first steel pillar into its place, he wrote in Paris, on June 16, 1904:

The buyers who have just come from home tell me how the diggers have grubbed up the roots of things at Juniper Street. Ah me! It is a

<sup>1</sup> After the second Chicago visit he continued to follow the modifications of plans, and decided every detail himself. For instance, when he was at the Hotel Royal Ponciana at Palm Beach, on February 12, 1904, he received a telegram from one of his people, who was in Chicago going over the new plans with the architect. To the query, "Shall we omit columns ninth floor north and south sections same as third floor?" he wired in care of Burnham: "What will the additional cost be? How are upper stories affected?" The change was not O.K.'d until Wanamaker saw the new plans. During his absences in Europe he was consulted by cable whenever any question arose that had to do with the physical structure of the building.

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part of myself that goes out and away with the downing of the worn-out old building. But the best remains with the faithful ones still there, whose work abides and whose valor of noble service can never be forgotten. My heart has an ache in it, though! <sup>1</sup>

The second section presented a problem all its own. While in the first and third sections it was possible during excavations and the erection of the framework to shut off a portion or all from time to time, the middle section had to be built in such a way that at no time the Market and Chestnut Street ends be separated. A complete suspension of communications and the failure to maintain at least a thoroughfare for employees and customers would have seriously crippled the business. Experience had been an invaluable teacher. What was learned in the excavations of the first section was useful in making possible a still greater feat—maintaining the life and circulation of all the departments while the middle section was being constructed. In a personal message to his employees Wanamaker gave them a diagram of how the foundations were being built, to assure them that safety measures were being taken in the underpinning. He explained that he was digging thirty-four feet to water line and then on through eleven more feet of gravel, that solid rock was under the entire block, and that the beams used for the floors were from twelve to eighteen tons each. At the end he stated that "the new building and the old also shall have my closest personal superintendence." To his people the last sentence was worth more than all the technical explanations that went before.

<sup>1</sup> But when the first section was opened, in 1906, there was joy in the achievement. Wanamaker wrote: "Compare, if you can, the old freight station's miserable lamps with to-night's mighty blaze of electricity shining from the three hundred and sixty-three windows of the little section of our new building on less than one-fourth of the block at Juniper and Market Streets. Picture, if you can, how the whole place will look when the other sections are completed. Back of the light—electricity; back of the electricity—dynamos and engines; back of the dynamos and engines—mind!"

With his own employees Wanamaker had never experienced even the symptoms of a mutinous spirit, let alone a strike, during a business career of over forty years. It remained for him to be confronted with a labor problem during the second year of the building of the first section of his new store. With thousands of men, none of them employed directly by him, working for numerous contractors, he had thought it wise in the very beginning to avoid trouble by stipulating that only union labor be used. To this his people had so rigidly adhered that he was astonished to find the unions squabbling with one another and with contractors, although, as he was able to declare publicly, "not a mechanic has been employed on the building except a union man." During the summer and early autumn of 1905 labor troubles multiplied. Used to remedying difficulties and clearing up misunderstandings by knowing how and by being willing to make things right, it was a revelation, which ended in angering him, to discover that there was nothing that he could do to get the men in some essential crafts back to work and hurry the completion of the section. Finally, on October 3, 1905, he sent to his construction agents a long memorandum:

The petty squabbles we have had in this one section of the building are enough for me. Our contracts are at such a point that we can stop if Philadelphia does not want our building and if its mechanics are ready to take the responsibility of stopping it. We have lived in this old building a good many years and can still go on as we have in the past. I am not going to have a lot of money tied up in disputes between various labor organizations with contractors due to matters with which we have nothing to do. The horror of it is that notwithstanding contracts that the labor organizations made not to enter into sympathetic strikes, they simply laugh in your face and walk out of your building, no matter what the consequences may be, when they want to.

I was born a workingman and am friendly to all mechanics and believe that they have rights that will justify their organization, but I do not

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believe that as long as they are not responsible for their contracts and do not act honorably to people who want to employ them, that anybody will feel much inclined to lock up indefinitely large sums of money to improve the city or to benefit themselves. Please give me early information as to our exact relations to the granite people and the iron contractors and Messrs. Thompson, Starrett & Co., with a view of arranging to defer the erection of the next section of our building until there is a better mind all around.

This is what we will do with the present section of the building—get the glass in and the building materials that are scattered about off of the floors and into the basement—let us clean up the building and get into it, plastered or unplastered, with elevators or without, and we will use it until the sky is brighter. The people of course will be put to serious inconvenience, but they will have to be told the causes that bring it about—that we are not responsible for it and can't help that we are held up by the conditions in the building trades.

This is plain and final and you will be prompt in bringing before me our exact position with every contract that is pending.

Wanamaker had come to the limit of patience. He meant what he said, and ordered the excavating for the second section to be suspended. He reiterated his decision to give up the project for the time being. He was even more positive, and said that "the added cost of having so much money locked up in an idle building is a warning to us of what we may expect at each step we take." He declared that he would not build the second and third sections until he was assured of the good faith of the union leaders. He explained this decision thus:

A threat has been openly made, which can be easily proven. Representatives of labor organizations have given us notice that notwithstanding our strict use of union labor, and conformity with the rules of their organization so far as informed, that we shall not be permitted to build the second section of our building which we expected to start with the first of January next, unless it is built according to the views of labor leaders who make interpretations of their own rules and relations to their kindred organizations to suit their notions at particular times, whether they agree or not with former declarations and customs that have main-

tained. The unfinished building itself in the very heart of the city, held up by the disagreements and irreconcilability of the various branches of work people who have left it, is an object lesson to warn all enterprising people against undertakings dependent upon the present rule and regulation of labor organizations.

The labor troubles were finally adjusted. Wanamaker's bold threat, and his unhesitating use of publicity, did much to turn the tide against the labor leaders. Seeing that the greatest piece of building construction in Philadelphia was on the point of being abandoned or at least indefinitely suspended, at the beginning of winter, the workers (perhaps it was their wives) refused to sanction "sympathetic" strikes. They returned to the job, and the second section began to go up.

The slow progress of the building operations, aggravated by the labor difficulties, meant not only annoyance in store-keeping, but a serious loss through carrying so much utilized space. Then, when the improvements that provoked the rise in assessment were still of no value to the store, but rather an expense, the tax assessors made a sweeping increase in their appraisal of the Wanamaker block. To the Board of Revision, in 1906, Wanamaker made an earnest plea for relief, pointing out that another year would pass before he would begin to reap any profit from his improvements. He showed how the method of building that he had been compelled to adopt kept idle through years a large portion of his space, and he remarked that he had the right to expect encouragement and support in an undertaking that meant so much for Philadelphia as well as for his own business. The increased assessment was scaled down for a year. But it was put on again the next year. Taxes for empty buildings is an item that must be included in the total cost of the nine years' enterprise. During the early part of the period, when the memory of

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Wanamaker's political activities still rankled, the municipal authorities sometimes went out of their way to hamper the progress of the work.

We shall skip several years, during which the new building in New York went up and was opened, the panic of 1907 was weathered, and Wanamaker consented to have issued \$6,000,000 of five-per-cent gold mortgage bonds for the completion of the Philadelphia store. The bonds were taken up immediately. There was already tangible evidence of the beauty and substantial character of the new building and of Wanamaker's success in constructing a granite edifice of fourteen massive stories. No event better vindicated his pioneer vision in building construction than the linking up of the stores with the subway systems in Philadelphia and New York. Wanamaker did not have to adjust himself to the new conditions of transportation. He was ready before they were! On August 3, 1908, the Philadelphia advertising announced that "Wanamaker's in New York and Philadelphia are the only two stores in both cities that are built on the same level as the subway station." When the first train arrived at the Thirteenth Street station, the passengers could look right into the windows of Wanamaker's, and when they got off they could go into the new "subway store" without climbing a single step.<sup>1</sup>

As he was coming to the last section, Wanamaker's diary records, on October 26, 1908:

There is a big hole in the Chestnut Street end of the block, and it is always full of horses and carts. The store is crowded, but it is because the people are pushed into a smaller area. The business is behind last year and I think it will continue so until we get more room again.

<sup>1</sup> The spacious basement of the new building, on the subway level, became "The Down Stairs Store," a name copyrighted by John Wanamaker. The idea of having in the basement a complete stock of different kinds of lower-priced goods, made possible by the new buildings in New York and Philadelphia, was an innovation in general storekeeping, quickly followed by others.

The Christmas season of 1908 was the hardest John Wanamaker ever experienced, deprived as he was of the Chestnut Street frontage. He decided that the third section would have to go faster, and he dreamed of getting it completed for the Christmas season of 1909. On February 15, he wrote:

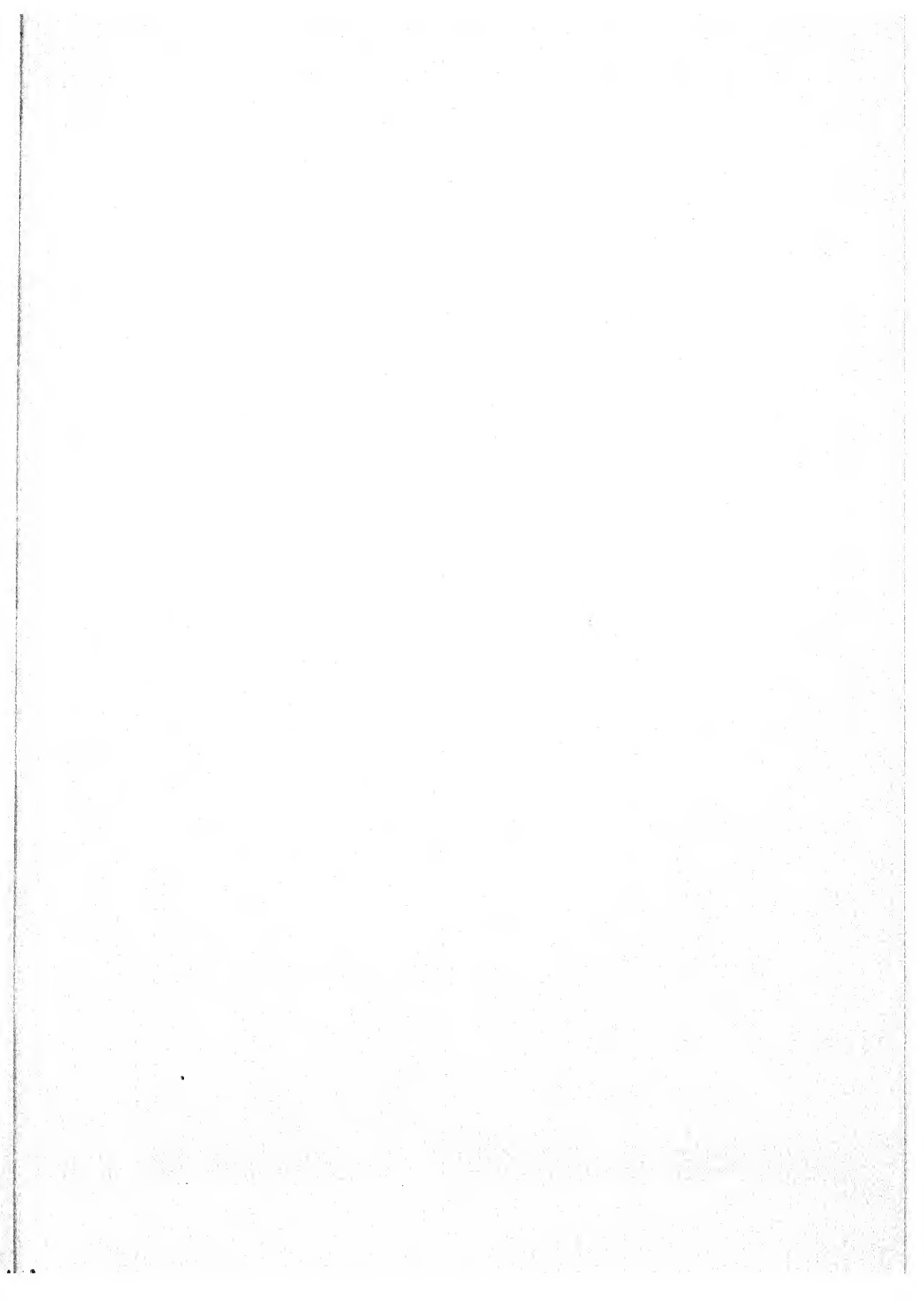
I went over to the new section and there must be 40 of the columns in place and some of the eye beams. Things are going with a rush. Do you know that there is but little building going on and materials and men come along just when you want them, and they work hard because money is scarce with them.

Everything was ready for the laying of the corner stone on June 12, 1909. For this occasion he prepared a long address, reviewing the business history of the Philadelphia store. But on the previous day he wrote:

I shall speak only part of it, because the program is long, and the addresses of the others are important and to be printed also. Everything is keyed to the highest pitch, and my people say that "To-morrow will be our biggest day." I have much yet to do in rewriting the address after it comes to me in print. I must take pains, as it is to be a landmark for future guidance.<sup>1</sup>

On October 4, 1909, the master builder told the Wanamaker Business Club that no expense must be spared to make things perfect but that

<sup>1</sup> The full account of the various ceremonies attendant upon the completion of the new building in New York in 1907, and of the Philadelphia building in 1909, 1910, and 1911, together with the text of the speeches delivered on those occasions, can be found in the *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, which was published in two volumes in 1911 and 1913. What the founder himself said, in regard to his own life and work and business policies, has been drawn upon throughout his biography, and is therefore given no place here. What he thought of his new store can be summed up in his own words in an editorial: "This unusually large building, if it were a ship, would be rated and recorded by the insurance companies AA-A1, as of the highest quality of safety, copper-fastened, powerfully equipped, prepared, humanly speaking, for every emergency." And some years later, in November, 1919, speaking of the difficulties in building the Philadelphia store, he wrote that "After it had been erected as a splendid physical monument, I realized that it, in itself, did not mean much—it was the idea behind it that counted. The building or vehicle that incloses the seller and his goods is not important until his reputation is made."



March 1,

I have been in Philadelphia since Thursday night, doing the anniversary and giving myself up to locating the final spaces and places in the new building from stem to stern, from top to bottom, having with me the managers and chiefs of the sections as required.

March 4,

I am going to Philadelphia to-night because of the expected new strike of 100,000 mechanics at midnight to-night, all dropping their tools in every part of the city to cripple all buildings, out of sympathy with the trolley strikers, in order to compel the transit company to come to the strikers' terms. We have had between 4 and 500 mechanics at work on the new building, and now they will leave, and for how long nobody knows. The labor unions can call out our elevator men and engineers and stop our engines and elevators from running. I must be on deck to-morrow to arrange anything made necessary by this new condition. Between the two cities there is enough going on to keep me busy.

May 4,

Rodman knows the wrestling I am doing with the new fixtures of the new sections. Counters like those of the 5 & 10 cent store are easily laid out, but to make the suitable setting for the jewelry and for the artistic things of even dry goods, requires more brains than I have at my command.

It was a proud day for Wanamaker when he put the capstone in place on June 12, 1910, and a prouder day still when he opened with his own hands the massive Chestnut Street doors six months later.<sup>1</sup> His capstone speech is one of the most charming and appealing of his addresses, and in it he gave some idea of the difficulties he had to overcome in realizing his dreams.<sup>2</sup> On the capstone he had written:

<sup>1</sup> From the diary on this day: "14 Nov. Such a tremendous day it has been. I opened the central door on Chestnut Street at one minute to eight and flocks of people poured in all day. I kept on shaking hands until flatteries drowned me. Then I went off to see callers. It is now 7:30 and I am going to look in at the Business Club and go out with Rodman to get an 8:30 supper in the Bungalow and take first train to N. Y. in the morning."

<sup>2</sup> This address is printed in full in *The Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, vol. i, pp. 126-131.

## HOME OF THE PHILADELPHIA STORE 215

LET THOSE WHO FOLLOW ME CONTINUE TO BUILD WITH THE PLUMB OF HONOR, THE LEVEL OF TRUTH, AND THE SQUARE OF INTEGRITY, EDUCATION, COURTESY AND MUTUALITY.

The final touches were postponed until after the Christmas season, not only because of the shortness of time, but also because Wanamaker told his people that they were never too old or experienced to learn, and that the first Christmas in the new building ought to teach everybody from himself down to stock boy and cash girl many lessons of adjustment to the new conditions. He reminded them all that it was the law of life that privileges entailed responsibilities, and that from those who had much, much was expected.

The dedication of the building was first planned to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the business. Then it was thought wise to postpone the arduous round of festivities from April until after the founder had been to Europe for his cure and to attend the coronation in London. When he returned, it was not the season for a dedication; and his store families were more interested in the Golden Jubilee of the man than anything else. During his absence the installation of the organ in the Grand Court had been completed. Back in Philadelphia, he wrote:

I heard the big St. Louis organ yesterday for the first time. It is a beauty and a hummer in the great fine court. Think of a store with the undoubtedly largest organ in it of the United States and its echo—a fine Choir Organ on the 10th floor—and its still other great organ in Egyptian Hall.

Surely we are well organ-ized.

When his son suggested the afternoon of December 30—the last business day of the fiftieth year—for the dedication, the elder Wanamaker assented most heartily. Another Christmas season was coming on. It was well to concen-

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF EVERY MAN'S HOUSE

ONLY Americans who made their living by their pens or who were constantly in public life—and not all of them—have to their credit as many writings as John Wanamaker. For a man who was always active in business his literary output was incredible. And yet the longest manuscript that has come into our possession is the life of Isaiah Williamson. In eighty type-written pages Wanamaker told the story of a man who had amassed a competence at the age of forty and had decided to give up business for travel and a reflective life. Something prevented Williamson from doing this. He went back to work and became one of the richest men in Philadelphia. But he lived to the end of his days in a strictly frugal, almost miserly, manner. Although he was a bachelor and had only collateral heirs, Williamson allowed himself no luxury. He seemed to have no thought to provide himself with even ordinary comforts. He could not have been called a miser, however, for he did not worship money; in fact, during his life he gave over two million dollars for the foundation of the school that bears his name.<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker admired Williamson's thrift and industry. He had great respect for his business ability. He appreciated the broad vision of the man in the working out of whose philanthropic plans he played a large part. But Wanamaker could not feel that Williamson had made the most of his talents or of the fruit of them. He was embar-

<sup>1</sup> See below, chap. xx.

rassed in the effort to give a discriminating delineation of the character and a just appraisal of the life work of his friend. Probably for that reason the biography of Isaiah Williamson remained unpublished. How hold up to the emulation of young men this frugal Quaker who, despite his industry, his thrift, and his great talents, had so narrowly circumscribed his activities, who had in the final analysis got so little out of life?

Genial living appealed to Wanamaker. From boyhood he liked nice things—good clothes, a comfortable home, luxuries within his means, diversions that did not conflict with his religious convictions. He was the whole-hearted, simple-minded type of man who could not have made a fortune by display and catering to adornment had he not believed that money ought to be used, when one had it to spare, for creature comforts. His advertising invited people to buy good things, tasteful things, beautiful things. He set the example in his own life. His philosophy of living was far from being that of a utilitarian.

All this did not mean, however, that he did not set high store by thrift. In the last year of his life he answered a high-school principal's query thus:

Many young people feel that a good appearance is of more importance than anything else, but unless it is supplemented by habits of thrift, it will not get one very far. Thrift is one of the foundation stones of character and the practicing of it makes easier the cultivation of self-control, which is also one of the greatest factors in life. An active account in a savings bank is one of the best recommendations that a young man or a young woman can have, because it indicates that they intend to try and succeed by their own efforts, and not to depend on others for their success.

Shortly before he died he wrote to a Southern correspondent:

What heartaches and humiliations could be avoided if every man,

being an integral part of the foundation of every man's house, it was an activity in which a church could well engage.

In order to make this unique idea feasible, Wanamaker consulted his lawyers and was told that the State Legislature would have to pass a special act to make such a bank legal under the Pennsylvania banking laws. Friends were found at Harrisburg, when the bill was drafted, to introduce it. There was no opposition, and the Senate and House of Representatives passed, on May 20, 1889, "an act to provide for the incorporation and regulation of savings banks and institutions without capital stock, established for the encouragement of saving money." Under this act "The First Penny Bank of Philadelphia" was incorporated on November 8, 1889.

The organization had been launched on July 10, 1888, in the book room of the Bethany Sunday School, and accepted deposits of "one cent and upward." When it was authorized to open as a bank, Wanamaker purchased a house at the corner of Bainbridge and 21st Streets, and had it made over into modest offices. He took the presidency, and got substantial men—most of them Bethany associates—to serve with him on the understanding that it was a purely benevolent organization. The charter made it illegal for any officer, trustee, or employee to borrow its funds on any collateral whatsoever.

The beginning and development of the Penny Savings Bank make a romantic story. The first helper was D. L. Anderson, who was associated with Wanamaker in Bethany work.<sup>1</sup> Anderson was a successful clothing merchant, one

<sup>1</sup> D. L. Anderson, at this writing, is still living. At the Union League he told the biographer that when he came to Philadelphia, a country boy, to look for work in the 1850's, he happened to see "Welcome" over a door, and went in. It was the Y. M. C. A. Secretary Wanamaker, who made him welcome, got his address, and the next day at his room he found a letter

of Wanamaker's intimates, and an invaluable worker at Bethany, especially during the years that Wanamaker spent in Washington. Anderson told us that "the Penny Savings Bank was started on a bicycle." It grew through the financial ability and devoted sacrifice of the organizers and directors and through the precious asset of implicit confidence the depositors had in the name of the founder and president. When it began to grow there was naturally opposition, and it required courage and self-control for Wanamaker and his associates to keep on quietly with the great work.

After five years, during four of which Wanamaker had been in Washington, and the last of which was marked by a panic in the country, nearly six thousand active accounts were on the books, and there was over two hundred thousand dollars on deposit. After five years more the deposits had passed the million mark—all small accounts. This fact led enemies to take advantage of an escapade of one of the bank's paid officials to spread rumors that it was insolvent. John Wanamaker, president, and Samuel M. Clement, formerly sheriff of Philadelphia, vice-president, were both in Europe. The *Evening Star* of July 8, 1899, carried a first-page story, with huge headlines: "Muddle in the Bank. Books of First Penny Savings Fund to be examined. Has there been defalcation? Commissioner acts." Wanamaker cabled the State Commissioner of Banking to make an investigation, and published in all the newspapers the commissioner's sworn statement that the bank was "in a sound and prosperous condition, with its funds safely invested in first mortgages and ground rents."

This was the last attack. The period of imitation had now come. All over the United States men began to study and book left by Wanamaker. It was he who had active charge of the arrangements for the City of Philadelphia's statue to John Wanamaker on City Hall Plaza, erected in 1923.

delphia in the latter years of his life made impossible his own presence always. But wherever he was, and whatever he was doing, the weekly balance sheet was forwarded to the president, who never failed to look over it and to make inquiries about items on it. The private files contain these sheets, carefully preserved through all the years. On most of them are marginal notes in pencil. Wanamaker liked to pass personally upon investments, and he used to say to the other directors—busy men like himself—that in their multiplicity of interests there was none that was so much a sacred trust as this enterprise.

Twelve years before the bank was provided for Bethany a savings fund was started in the Wanamaker store. Wanamaker instituted it in 1876, shortly after the Grand Depot was opened. Employees were encouraged to deposit their savings with the cashier. They could be withdrawn at any time and to any amount without notice. He allowed five per cent interest, and to those who had achieved a creditable record for savings through seven years, an extra premium of five per cent was given. In 1897 a junior savings fund was established, with special inducements to the younger employees to save their pennies.<sup>1</sup> Various building and loan associations were formed among the employees back in the days when organizations of this character were a new departure. Wanamaker considered building and loan stock as the very best form of combined investment and savings for the salaried man. When his advice was asked concerning the investment of sums that had accumulated in the savings bank, he invariably answered: "Good first

Penny Savings Bank were still holding their monthly meetings in the private office of the founder and late president. These meetings have recently been transferred to the new building of the bank on Chestnut Street opposite the store.

<sup>1</sup> At one time he actually matched the juniors' savings from their wages, dollar for dollar. But so few took advantage of it that he grew discouraged about this.

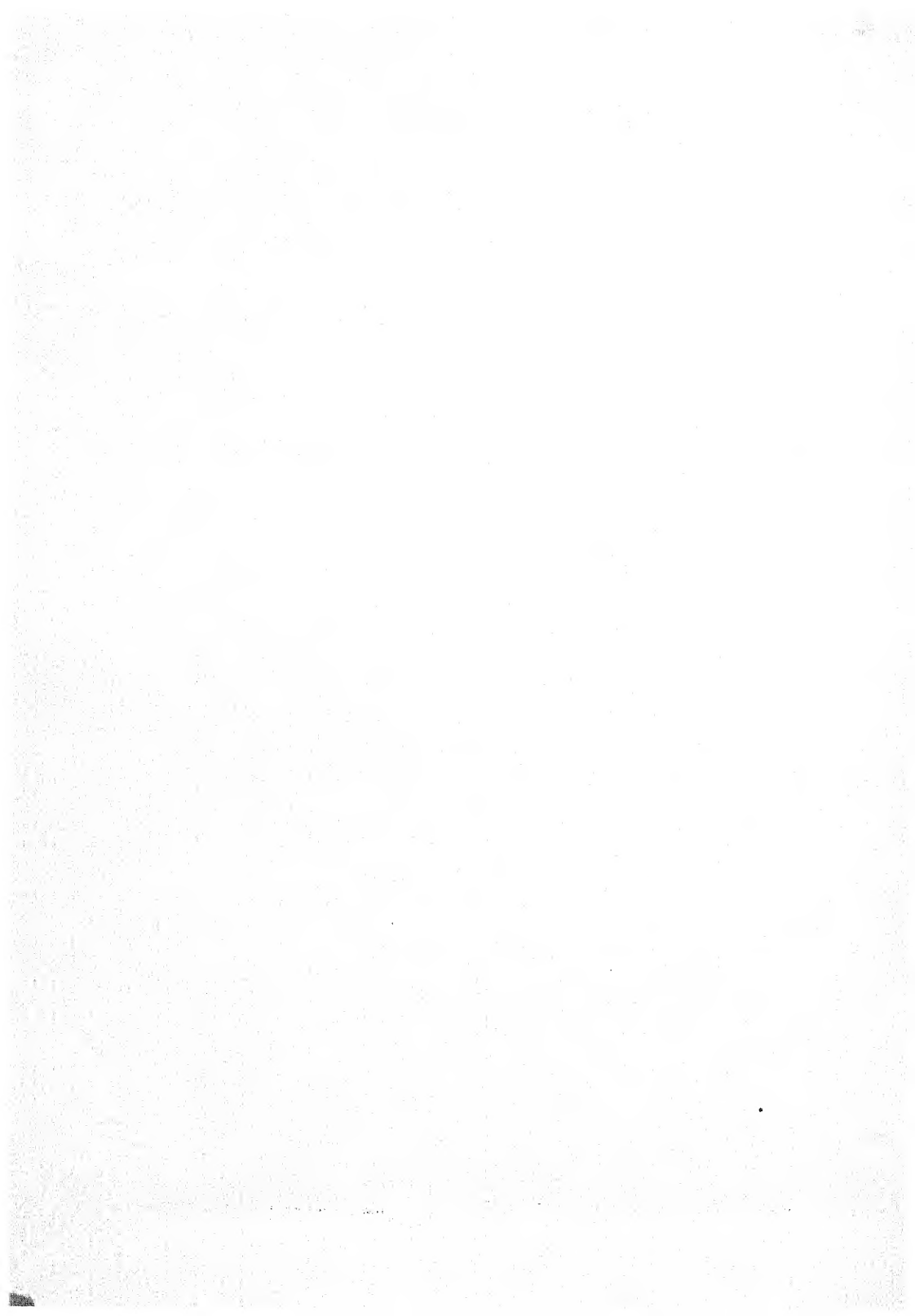
mortgages up to not more than sixty per cent of the impartially appraised value of the property, preferably in your own locality, but never on the homes of friends or acquaintances."

Throughout his long life, by example as well as by precept, Wanamaker expressed the conviction that life insurance, equally with a savings account, was an essential foundation stone in every man's house. He took out his first insurance policy when he was still in his teens, working on a small salary.<sup>1</sup> When he was married, and before he started Oak Hall, he increased his insurance "until it hurt," as he put it. No policy was allowed to lapse. The premiums had the first call upon his income. When he began to prosper and get beyond the place where his death would have left his family not provided for, instead of turning a deaf ear to the solicitations of agents, he was always keen to study the new forms of life insurance that were being evolved, and he kept on taking out new policies. Before any other business man in America he realized the unique value of life insurance not only for protection, but as a business asset. On his fiftieth birthday he received a letter, signed by the presidents of the two big life-insurance companies of Philadelphia, and by the general agents of all the other standard companies represented in the city, congratulating him upon his good health and success, and upon the fact that he was "insured for a larger sum than any other American citizen."<sup>2</sup>

When the National Association of Life Underwriters held its convention in Philadelphia in 1895, Wanamaker

<sup>1</sup> He told the National Life Underwriters' Convention on October 25, 1895, that he had "placed his first policy of insurance while working on a small salary," that he "had the policy yet," and that he thought "it was forty years ago—certainly it was at least thirty-five."

<sup>2</sup> "John Wanamaker carries \$1,000,000, passing John B. Stetson as the most heavily insured man in the United States."—*Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 7, 1888.



world. Probably no one statement of a policyholder ever before or since resulted in such a tremendous increase in the volume of life-insurance business. Certainly the reasons for life insurance, given that evening, have never been more decisively and convincingly phrased, if the fact that after thirty years they are still being used in advertising matter is any indication. He told the insurance men:

"My five reasons for my sixty-two life insurance policies: 1. Afraid I might become uninsurable; 2. Best form of investment; 3. A savings fund; 4. From the standpoint of quick determination, more profitable than any other investment I could make; 5. Enables a man to give away all he wishes, and still make such an estate as he cares to leave."<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker was no indiscriminating enthusiast in life insurance. He insured in every good company. But he kept himself informed as to the standing of the companies, and when policies matured he compared performances with promises. For instance, he came to disbelieve in the tontine form of insurance, and did not hesitate to say so. On January 9, 1903, in acknowledging the settlement of a matured policy he wrote: "My tontine policies in the various companies have been extremely disappointing and contrary to expectations held out when insurances were placed."

He was intensely interested in the movement to correct abuses in the great New York companies and to remove them from family or group control. The files contain reports of investigating committees, with marginal notes in his own hand. When the insurance investigations were in full blast, he was invited to be one of twenty-five Philadelphians, who had large policies, to organize a Pennsylvania State branch of the Mutual Life Policy Holders'

<sup>1</sup> Since Wanamaker's death the biographer has seen this statement of 1895 used several times in insurance advertisements in daily newspapers of our largest cities.

Association. His acceptance and his willingness to take an active part in restoring the confidence of the people in the great companies led Judge Parker and Samuel Untermyer to urge him to run for Mutual Life trustee on the Fusion ticket.

Together with Charles E. Hughes, John Wanamaker consented to join Messrs. Dexter and Duncan, superintendents of the Domestic and Foreign Agencies, and Messrs. Hindman and Paige, managers at Louisville and Detroit, in contesting six places on the Administration ticket. Wanamaker was the recipient of hundreds of letters and unsolicited proxies from all over the United States.<sup>1</sup> The correspondence is pathetic in some cases. Small policyholders who did not know what it was all about and how to vote, but who felt sure that their money would be protected if John Wanamaker would only vote for them, sent him their proxies. It was a touching example of confidence. Wanamaker and Hughes attended the election, but were defeated. The reforms, however, were made; so the protest had its effect.<sup>2</sup>

Wanamaker did not wish his intervention to be misunderstood. He stated publicly that he had more confidence than ever in the management of the Mutual Life as well as of the Equitable and the New York Life, and that what

<sup>1</sup> On October 20, 1906, an Indian school-teacher wrote from Pine Ridge Agency, S. D.: "I hold a policy in the Mutual, and see that your name is on the Fusion ticket. Please accept my proxy. I worked in your great store in the transfer department at Philadelphia. I often regret that I did not stay there, but I was nothing but a little savage boy from the Wild West then. One thing I never let go. I have kept up my studies begun there. I am a full-blooded Sioux, but I always think that what white boys could do I could do it too."

<sup>2</sup> On the executive committee of the policyholders that backed Wanamaker and Hughes were representative Americans. One of them, Dr. Maurice Francis Egan, a professor at the Catholic University in Washington, wrote Wanamaker that the contest had served its purpose. Had not outstanding men consented to run, public opinion would not have been felt as it undoubtedly was. The Fusion candidates failed of election only because of inability to split tickets and the relatively few number of voters and proxies.

had happened was in the natural evolution of the life-insurance business. The great companies had become public trusts, to be administered hereafter solely for the benefit of their hundreds of thousands of policyholders. This principle had become established, and the conduct of big insurance companies was now no more a private concern than any other national institution, representing the whole people and responsible to them. He was not young enough to keep on increasing his insurance. His son Rodman, however, not only followed his father's example, but went far beyond him.<sup>1</sup>

More notable even than the 1895 address was the ringing praise of life insurance and life-insurance agents at the Fidelity leaders' convention in Philadelphia on September 10, 1913. He said: "I would take a journey to San Francisco just to shake hands with the man who started me in life insurance, if he were living"; and, "I do not know men more worthy than those enlisted to do good work for life-insurance companies." So great a believer was he in the mission of life insurance that he was able to declare:

"I wish I knew how to buoy you up and give you a great sense of the splendid business you are in. What you do for a man who takes a policy of insurance is to endow him with something that remains for his heirs after he has left the world. It seems as though it pieced out his life by protecting and producing an income for those for whom he cared in his working days. By your work you put money in trust for the wife and children. Do not go around in a sheepish way requesting permission to talk life insurance.

<sup>1</sup> In his father's life time Rodman Wanamaker took his place as the most heavily insured man in the world. He also became a trustee of the Mutual Life Insurance Company. In 1924, two years after John Wanamaker's death, his son announced that he intended to increase his life insurance, which was already over \$5,000,000, to as much as he could get. He authorized his agent to apply for additional insurance policies with standard companies all over the world until the limit for his age was reached.

Make a study of each man you are after; know how to approach him without saying a word about life insurance until you have his confidence. You can do almost anything you want with a man who has confidence in you.

"There is a popular belief that many of the men who take up life insurance are men that have failed in business. This is altogether an error. The man that has failed in other businesses, unless it were for some causes that are extraordinary, such as the war, is a man that would fail in anything, and he would fail quicker in insurance than almost anything else. The railroad people are believed to be the brightest men in the country, but I believe there are far fewer accidents in the insurance line that you are running than there are on the railroad lines."

The dignity and importance of the agent's work was not a matter of opinion, but of fact. The trouble with the insurance business was simply that men had not come to realize what insurance could do for them and the vital part it could play in their lives. They were sometimes annoyed when urged to do what was wholly for their own good. Taking his own business career as an example, he declared:

I did not know what life insurance really meant until my policies were falling due and the final payments had been made and I had a large sum of money with which I began to build my Philadelphia store. I would not have been prepared to start my building when I did, if I had not saved two and a half millions, little by little. I had not realized what I was doing! Life insurance is the savings bank if you choose to put it on the simplest, plainest basis. It is not only a savings bank, but it is collateral.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the early 1890's Wanamaker's first notable statement in favor of large life insurance said: "Twenty years ago I had a capital of about a half million dollars. I then realized that a business man with a half million of capital and a million and a half of insurance on his life would have better credit than one with a half million capital and no insurance—so I took the insurance. I now find that trading on the credit it created has made more profit for me than if the money which went into insurance had gone directly into my business."

Wanamaker told the Fidelity agents, as he was in a position to do, that the large amount of collateral at his command through his life-insurance savings had helped him more than once in times of stress. In 1895 he had spoken of the usefulness of large life insurance in the panic two years earlier. It was even more useful in the panic of 1907.

On November 29, 1918, Wanamaker wrote a letter to the "Association of Life Insurance Presidents Assembled in Twelfth Annual Session," with permission to publish, in which he said that he never had got far in saving until he experienced the value of having found "a distinct and pleasing object for which to save" in the form of the premiums on policies constantly falling due. He reiterated that he could "never be grateful enough to those who so ingeniously taught me and influenced me to take out endowment policies which terminated when they could best aid me in carrying out new plans in my business. When this happened I felt as if a gold mine had opened at my hand." He wanted to go on record in his belief that life insurance had become the safest and best regulated business in the country—"no longer an association of investors joined by agreement in an undertaking with possible risks, but distinctly an absolute contract that insures and at the same time becomes an assurance of actuality and results." Therefore he believed that "the life-insurance companies are naturally the most practical savings banks for the people of the United States."

In the last decade of his life Wanamaker several times urged the value of life insurance in his store editorials. He begged people to avoid speculation and the foolish buying of shares of stock in "undeveloped affairs." He pointed out that "life insurance assures confidence; confidence begets credit; and credit makes profit," giving his own experience

in business as proof of the statement. But he believed the best argument for life insurance—"the transcendent and insistent argument to every man's conscience," as he put it—to be proper provision for one's own. This truth he stated in a store editorial thus:

It is almost a crime to bring up a family in affluence and for its master or chief not to arrange his affairs so that they shall not be exposed to sudden and severe poverty in case of death, when, by forethought and the help of substantial insurance companies, he can put something aside out of his earnings for the mother and each child without being dishonest with his creditors.

The same thought was again expressed more sentimentally:

From the day an honest man pays the first premium for life insurance, that first receipt of his gives a new impulse to his arm and new light to his eye and a new hope to his heart, and if it so be that he does not live to pay another premium he has lit a lamp in the house that will lighten it when the little family comes back from the grave they left wet with tears.

Now that heavy insurance on the part of big business men, either directly by them or on their lives by the corporations they head, has become a commonplace of American business life, Wanamaker's rôle of pioneer is readily grasped and accepted.<sup>1</sup> But he felt just as he felt about his savings bank venture, that there was still much to be done to educate the people as a whole to consider life insurance both as a moral obligation and as a sound business proposition. This explains the store editorials. It explains also the insurance encouragement and aid given to his employees, which he first thought of and launched in the

<sup>1</sup> "Leading life insurance companies state that John Wanamaker, by his repeated indorsement of the institution of American life insurance, has done more than any other one man to give this plan of systematic and organized thrift the standing it has to-day in the minds of business and professional men throughout the United States."—*Eastern Underwriter*, June 6, 1924.

1860's, and in which he persisted despite discouragements throughout his business career. Shortly after the war he had a report made upon the working out of the government's insurance plan for soldiers. When he read it, it dawned on him that elsewhere than in his own store family a distressingly large number of people simply do not see what is to their own advantage. He shook his head, and said with a laugh: "I had to be persuaded about life insurance. I guess everybody does. It's funny how we have to be urged to do things for our own good that are so plain one wouldn't think we could miss them."

The foundations of every man's house are obvious. But are they?

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1912

NOT since 1892, when he was a member of the Cabinet and his instinct of loyalty drove him to throw his heart into the unsuccessful campaign for the re-election of President Harrison, had Wanamaker taken so much interest in and devoted so much time to a presidential campaign as he gave to secure the re-election of William Howard Taft in 1912. It marked his re-entry into national politics after ten years of what amounted virtually to complete abstention. We have seen how his reform fight in Pennsylvania inevitably forced him into the position of being an irregular. When Roosevelt became President because of McKinley's assassination, almost at the beginning of McKinley's second term, it did not suit him to have a factional fight going on in Pennsylvania. The great issue at stake he professed not to see, and he had never concealed his lack of regard for John Wanamaker, dating back to civil service disagreements in Washington when the youthful Roosevelt was a zealous commissioner and Wanamaker the shrewd and trusted adviser of Benjamin Harrison.<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker had helped McKinley in 1900, not only on the stump, but also by depositing \$50,000 in a New York bank to be used for the prosecution of election frauds. In 1904 he seems to have done nothing except make the contribution to the campaign fund that was expected of a prominent Republican. In the first Taft campaign, when New York was feeling pessimistic, Wanamaker issued to the

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 297-300, 325.

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American business world a stirring pronouncement of his belief that New York was "on the eve of taking a great step upward." He said that he was backing this conviction by increasing vastly his business expenditures at a time when other merchants, still under the spell of panic days, were retrenching. He declared that the common sense of the American people would put Taft into office, and that he was not going to wait until after election to prepare for "the coming of the new dawn."

On November 3, 1908, he wrote from his room in the Plaza Hotel that

the streets all the way up and all about here are full of noisy people waiting for the election returns. One hears horns, rattles, whistles, and drums. There is great excitement as both Taft and Bryan are claiming victory. Of course it is Taft. But what a rupture and eruption there would be if by chance Bryan got in. It would mean more hard work ahead, more passing through the deep waters of last winter.

And the next day he put down:

The day after election and Taft is It. All the people seem to be hugging themselves because they have escaped Bryan. The day is dull and showery but there are a great many people around. Now, if the business world takes up business ways again calmly and earnestly, we may sail out on smooth seas to prosperous voyages. It will be such a comforting thing to have the old times restored again and business coming in without oxen to pull it to us. We certainly have been through a lot. Our day's sales now show increases here in New York in comparison with the panicky days of a year ago. But poor old Philadelphia—always a timid manufacturing center before elections—still has the cramps, to R. W.'s great and constant pain.

On January 21, 1911, John Wanamaker was a guest of honor at the Pennsylvania Society's dinner to President Taft at the Hotel Astor in New York. The President, deeply involved at the time in perplexing difficulties, was struck with the shrewdness and incisiveness of the Philadelphia

merchant's comments on current affairs, as they sat side by side through the long dinner. Therefore, when he was confronted with the problem of calling an extra session in event of failure of the Canadian reciprocity bill a few weeks later, he invited Wanamaker to spend a week-end at the White House. The press saw in the invitation a wise decision on the part of the President to seek the advice of an old Republican who was in no way connected with either the progressives or the stand-patters. The Washington correspondents noticed that from the time the former Postmaster-General went to the White House from the train until he left to return to New York the President was constantly with him. They took a walk together; attended the Gridiron Club dinner on Saturday night; and occupied the proscenium box at the Belasco Theatre Sunday evening for the Salvation Army rally. An Associated Press despatch said:

There was never a time when a President of the United States stood more in need of advice not tainted with any of the ideas of the antagonistic elements in his own party than right now. . . . Everybody here seems to think that Mr. Wanamaker is probably the best man in the country to give unbiased and unprejudiced advice at a time when it is universally recognized that the Republican party is in sore straits. It is pointed out that Wanamaker is the one prominent Republican who has kept himself free from the entanglements of the opposing elements.

President Taft gracefully recognized his indebtedness to Wanamaker and the esteem in which he held him by going to Philadelphia at the end of the year to make the dedicatory address at the opening of the new Wanamaker store building—thus creating a precedent in American history.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of 1912 many newspapers and magazines, deprecating the inevitable split that seemed to be

<sup>1</sup> A second visit was made to the Wanamaker store on April 25, 1918, when the former President, now Chief Justice, was introduced in the Grand Court and spoke in Egyptian Hall.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1912 239

ahead of the Republican party because of Roosevelt's hostility to Taft, seriously considered whether it would not be possible to get the convention to discard political candidates altogether and nominate a business man for the Presidency. In these speculations and criticisms of existing conditions, Wanamaker's name was frequently mentioned.<sup>1</sup> He had no thought of seeking the Presidency for himself, but he did believe that it would be possible to organize throughout the country a strong movement of business men to save the party from internal political dissension. He felt, however, that Taft deserved a second term, and that there would be little hope of purchasing harmony and assuring victory in the November election if Roosevelt were allowed to veto the renomination of his successor in the Presidential office. The fanatical Wanamaker loyalty to the friend who had done something for him came to the front, as it always did when a friend needed Wanamaker's help. Denying and ridiculing the rumors that he had the presidential bee in his own bonnet, Wanamaker declared:

Taft stands head and shoulders above others who seek the office that he holds. It is only a great soul that makes a great man. The man who can stand the misinterpretations that Taft has stood of his work as President has kingly stuff in him.

So devoted was Wanamaker to Taft that he withdrew the Philadelphia store advertisement from the *North American* in the middle of February because he had made an objection against what he regarded as offensive cartoons of the President. The *North American* was supporting Roosevelt. There were protests from Progressives all over the country, who were surprised at Wanamaker's stand;

<sup>1</sup>In *Leslie's Weekly* for February 15, 1912, Mr. E. G. Simmons discussed five business men mentioned for the Presidency. They were—in the order named—John Wanamaker, David R. Francis, John G. Shedd, former Governor Alva Adams of Colorado, and John Claflin, President of the H. B. Claflin Co.

and everybody was astonished, because the *North American* was owned by members of the Wanamaker family. Sticking to his guns and sturdily explaining his position, Wanamaker said:

I am not in the position of my son Rodman, who has a restraining or controlling influence as an owner. I am in the very delicate position of a common citizen. The fact that I have spent a million and a half in advertising in your paper in the last fifteen years does not give me the right to say one single word, not one, and I think you believe that I do not want to do that. But I am coming to a place in my life where I believe that a different stand has to be taken by the newspapers regarding the President, whether it be Roosevelt, or Taft, or whoever it may be.

Instinctively I detest newspaper cartoons that accentuate any man's deformity or physical peculiarity in a gross and disgusting manner. This feeling that I have always had is only accentuated by the fact that in this case it is the President of the United States. I remember that the *North American* is in the Carlton Club, in the big clubs in Paris and Berlin, and that foreign readers take the pictures of a leading journal of our country as representing popular attitude toward the ruler of the greatest nation in the world. I know that many men never read the newspaper—they simply see the pictures. You must remember that it stirs me to my very bones when I think of thousands of young people who see your cartoons and thus have less respect for dignitaries. Just think of the seeds of resentment, of disrespect, of anarchy, that pictures like this of our elected ruler excite in the minds of people who do not know what to think except by a picture.

In the end, the editor admitted Wanamaker's contention that "the President of the United States deserved a kind of consideration different from that shown to any other person in public life," and promised not to make any more disagreeable cartoons about Taft. "Or about any man holding the office of President," amended Wanamaker. When the editor assented, the contract for the renewal of advertising was signed.<sup>1</sup> To the end of his life Wana-

<sup>1</sup> The quoted statement of Wanamaker's views on cartooning the President, and the conversation that followed with the editor of the *North American*, are taken from a stenographic record that has been preserved in the private files.

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maker held that this action had in no sense been an attempt to influence the policy of the newspaper, but merely indicated a wholly proper attitude of a citizen of the United States toward the office of the chief magistrate.

Wanamaker's championship of Taft gave Senator Penrose furiously to think. Like Quay, twenty-four years earlier, he sought an interview, which led to the following letter:

2032 WALNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

*11 March, 1912, 6 p. m.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:—

Mr. Stotesbury and I have been called upon by Senator Penrose and Mr. McNichol requesting us in your name to go to the June Convention.

Senator Penrose told the writer that he would arrange with you for an interview to discuss carefully the serious and red-hot conditions now upon the country. Mr. Stotesbury representing the banking and I the business world (measurably) have had a conference to-day and we both believe that before we can give an answer as to the Nominating Convention (which answer must be given before next Saturday) we should go over the present situation with you as suggested by the writer and assented to by Senator Penrose. To avoid publicity, New York would be the best place to meet if your plans for this week admit of it.

I have been ill at home for the past three weeks but will meet you in New York with Mr. Stotesbury any day and hour you name. Please advise me early, in your own best way.

Yours truly,

JOHN WANAMAKER.

The President's answer was to telegraph Wanamaker to come to the White House the following day for luncheon. To this invitation Wanamaker responded by a long letter, which a confidential messenger took to Washington. He explained that while he "would follow Senator Penrose in any good cause he had in hand," neither Mr. Stotesbury nor himself wanted any office. They did not care to be put in a position of being "simply servants of the old Pennsyl-

vania machine." But they were willing to be his servants, and believed that they "could be of greatest service to your Campaign Committee, working for you in the business world in ways that no political party could work." He pointed out that they were unwilling to be "called in to help a machine that has certainly been discredited so far as Philadelphia is concerned." In conclusion, Wanamaker warned Taft that the newspaper reporters were hot on his trail, and that the conference had better be a secret one. Wanamaker was not after publicity, nor was Stotesbury; but they did want to help the party and its logical leader.

President Taft did not feel that he could confer privately with the two Philadelphians. He was in a precarious position—and his Progressive enemies were looking for opportunities to assail him. On the other hand, he knew that the old-line bosses, like Penrose, were peculiarly sensitive. So he repeated his invitation to the White House, and Wanamaker went over on Friday afternoon, March 15.

In his diary he wrote:

It is all different here in Washington, yet strangely enough its newnesses do not disconcert me. In fact, as I rode up here in the President's car, I thought I saw old familiar faces in passing. The streets and the buildings are almost all as I left them twenty years ago. The rains fell and roared upon me all the way down here. It was a regular Taft freshet.

On the train on the way back the same evening, he added:

The President asked me twice to stay all night, and there was a small dinner and a musicale afterward. But I preferred to return home and be in my bed and early at my office.

Wanamaker brought back with him the President's personal request to Mr. Stotesbury and himself that they go as delegates to the nominating convention "because the President would like to have the business men of the coun-

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try represented in the convention." He announced to the press that he had acceded to the President's request, and that, although he had to go to Europe at his physician's bidding, he would return in time for the convention because

American patriotism was consecrated at its birth to the service of all the people. It rises to a higher level than the heedless following of an individual, however brilliant and admirable that man may be. Its opportunity and its duty to-day is the calm and deliberate consideration of the issues before this nation, according to the principles to which centuries of experience have certified. And this includes the doing of those things which it is obviously wise and right to do, and in which we can see our way ahead; and to refuse to do those things which are visionary, experimental, and dangerous.

The Progressive charges against the President, openly sponsored by Roosevelt, stirred Wanamaker deeply. When he sailed for Europe he sent back by the pilot boat a ringing manifesto that became known throughout the country and was called "the pilot letter." It was a plea for the Republicans to stand together and a warning that if they did not do so, there would be a Democratic administration. This was his excuse for one of "the two million business men of whom almost all had been taught to confine themselves to business and to leave questions of politics alone" to "step outside of my mercantile life to take this particular part in public affairs." He deplored the lack of interest on the part of business men in the approaching presidential campaign, especially in the face of "the radical crises, the cries of demagogues, and the menace to the tariff." He hit hard at the Democrats and Progressives alike for their announced intention of forcing on the country "unnecessary political issues." The country was already suffering more from "overlegislation than from lack of legislation. Multiplied statutes, if not enforced, give no relief, but positive harm." He pointed out that the experience of

four years in the presidential office was in itself a recommendation for re-election, which should not be overlooked or discounted, and concluded with his profession of faith in Taft:

I believe in his character, his capacity, his leadership. I believe that the experience he has had is a guarantee of better things. I have known him closely for twenty-two years and have absolute confidence in his integrity, honesty of purpose, and tremendous ability to cope with the legal questions that are puzzling the great minds of the interpreters of the law. I believe that he should be upheld in enforcing, without permitting persecution or betrayal, the sacred rights of all the people. He has not followed a will-o'-the-wisp, nor has he chased rainbows. Steadfastly, with dignity, with effectiveness, with tireless effort, has he done his work.

While Wanamaker was taking his cure at Marienbad it became evident to political observers that Taft could control the Chicago Convention, but that this might lead to a Roosevelt bolt. The family felt that it would be better for Wanamaker to remain in Europe and avoid the excitement and discomfort of Chicago in June. But Wanamaker cabled from Frankfort-on-Main on May 22 that he was "ready to fulfill the President's request for his attendance at the convention unless he has better plans—only will want to know definitely his present mind." Taft answered: "Tell Mr. Wanamaker I have the votes to nominate me, but I need him and I want him."

Passage was secured on the *France*. But when Wanamaker got to Havre, there was a sudden strike of seamen and firemen ten minutes before the sailing hour. Precious days were lost with the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique assuring the passengers on board that the steamer would leave at any minute. In desperation Wanamaker returned to Paris—just too late to get to the Tuesday sailing of the *Lusitania*. We find in his diary:

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Paris Office, 6 p. m. Tuesday 6-11-12, in the rain, at Miss Harris' desk while Paul talks with Mrs. Heeren on the phone. I have just got in—Paul missed me at the Station. I found that two of our buyers were booked on the ship and had to take one of their rooms engaged in May. We leave at 9:30 and go out on a tender when the *Kaiser* comes from Southampton. 6:40 p.m. How queer it was to come out of France and travel to Paris and make the new start when we should have been halfway over the ocean.

The next day he wrote:

On the train en route to boat 3 p.m. and running into a fog. The Nord Deutscher Lloyd put me into the same compartment on the train with Gordon Bennett and we are having a six or seven hour ride together. I hope he does not get tired of me. But I am pretty tired of myself for having to gossip so much.

From the diary of this last transatlantic voyage—Wanamaker never went to Europe again—we take several passages:

*Kaiser Wilhelm II.* June 15, 1912. Halfway toward the port of New York. I am so thankful to be well, though the day has been long and rainy, the sea rough, and many sick. I have been in my cabin most of the day writing something for the Convention in case I arrive too late to go to Chicago. I am not at all clear, now that my alternative must go, whether I would have any legal standing in the Convention, seeing that another has been recognized and enrolled in my place.

When we get nearer the Western shores perhaps there will be Marconis, with information from Chicago that will throw some light on what can be done. Some young ladies on board are making up to me, but I am shy of them all, mamas included. All the time I have I give to gentlemen only.

June 17. I have just had an interesting talk with Bennett. He has unbent very much to me and talked a lot about himself. He is 71 years old and lives on his yacht almost half of his time, where he has a crew of 110. He commands it himself. Has 9 staterooms, each with a bath, for his guests. Can coal enough to cross the ocean. Takes a doctor along. Has been all over the world by water.

June 17. 9:30 p. m. Another wireless of welcome from the Phila.

staff and still later from R. W. saying a special train is ready for me, but I can decide nothing without knowing something of the status of things in Chicago. I believe we will land at dock between 7 and 8 Wednesday a.m., and I may get to Chicago safer and as soon by a regular train if there is one. There is a ball on the deck now. I am going up to look in on it.

9:30 p.m. Tuesday-6-18-12. The light at Sandy Hook looms up and in less than an hour we shall be at Quarantine, where R. W. has Marconied he will come for me. How I can get the baggage off I do not know, but perhaps it is all arranged by R. W. I will go straight on to Chicago if the train is ready. The boat is now slowing up.

During the last day of the voyage Wanamaker was kept informed both of the progress of things at Chicago and of the arrangements for getting him out there by daily wireless messages from his New York store. The following received in the morning is an illustration:

Taft holding strong. Root wins first skirmish chairmanship. Press representatives desirous getting steamer for interview. Special waiting Jersey City. Everything right.

Wanamaker did not quite understand the great interest that was aroused by his return. The special train waiting for him, of course, was spectacular, and good news. But he had not realized that while he was on the ocean Howard B. French, alternate to the Chicago Convention for delegate-at-large E. T. Stotesbury, had said that John Wanamaker had the backing of the big financial interests in New York and Philadelphia as compromise candidate between Taft and Roosevelt. Gordon Bennett got this bit of news in a wireless from the *Herald*. Wanamaker immediately wrote out a message of 1,138 words (which the North German Lloyd Company afterwards proudly stated was the longest private radiogram sent up to that time) reiterating his devotion to the President and his belief that

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his renomination alone would serve the interests of the country.

From the White House Rudolph Forster had telephoned to Wanamaker's office that the Secretary of the Treasury was going to issue a permit for John Wanamaker to get off the vessel at Quarantine. This was done. Rodman Wanamaker met his father, rushed him by tug to Jersey City, and just an hour from the time he left the *Kaiser Wilhelm II* the elder Wanamaker was speeding to Chicago over the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The run was made in eighteen hours and two minutes. By a curious coincidence, just as he entered the convention hall on the afternoon of June 19 his name was called in a poll involving Roosevelt and Taft. His answer was the first notice most of the delegates had of his arrival, and he received an ovation. Later he telegraphed his son: "Am invited to attend important conference to-night. Have good room. Taft vote increased 6. Strain tremendous. Odds favoring Taft. Send this to mother."

The convention was still in its preliminary organizing stage, with the Taft and Roosevelt forces struggling for control through the contests following challenges to state delegations.

On June 20 Henry Clews telegraphed Wanamaker from New York:

NEW YORK CITY, *June 20-12*

Nominate Taft and Hadley. It will be a combination that will down all opponents in the field. The business interests of the nation will respond at once and will immediately commence to discount the election of the ticket the success of which, with a bountiful harvest as now promised, will make a record-breaking year of prosperity for the entire country.

The next morning he received the following:

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 21.*

JOHN WANAMAKER,

BLACKSTONE HOTEL.

It will give me great pleasure if you will do me the honor to second my nomination in the convention if you can do so. Will you kindly advise Mr. Hilles accordingly.

WM. H. TAFT.

When the motion was made late in the afternoon of June 21 to make the temporary organization a permanent one, the Roosevelt delegates staged a demonstration that lasted for half an hour. It was expected to be their last gasp. For the final composition of the delegates indicated that the Taft organization was in control, and that all that had to be done was simply to go through the formality of nominating speeches, in which Wanamaker was to have a part. But the Progressive element immediately served notice upon leading members of the convention that the renomination of Taft would have a disastrous effect. It was in reality, of course, political blackmail, but it took the form of an earnest plea for a compromise candidate. This gave rise again to the mention of Wanamaker's name as the strongest candidate among "representative business men." Early in the morning of June 22, Wanamaker was waked by an urgent telephone message, "If your name is presented to the convention, we have friendly delegates who will vote for you." An immediate answer was requested in order that the affair could be arranged at breakfast.

Wanamaker's refusal was unhesitating. He was not to be led into any maneuver to divide the Taft forces. And he felt that Sherman must again have second place on the ticket. This stand took away the last hope of preventing the issue between Taft and Roosevelt from being decided in any other way than a direct roll call in the convention. Wanamaker worked loyally and effectively to secure Taft's

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nomination. Senator Harding presented Taft's name. Wanamaker followed Harding. In his brief address he declared that business men were not disposed to make investments while political conditions were so unsettled, and he denounced the Roosevelt supporters in one terse sentence:

American patriotism must surely rise at this time to a higher level than the blind and heedless following of any individual or of any individual's policy, however brilliant such may be.

Raising his voice above the groans and catcalls that greeted this statement, he cried out that "radical changes in the administration mean further depression and losses to labor" and that "uncertainty and instability in the conduct of public affairs create distrust and demoralization of business." His peroration sounded a note that was taken up years later by Mr. Coolidge. Wanamaker's words, "a restoration of faith in the Constitution," became the slogan in the campaign of 1924.<sup>1</sup>

We are able to give the story of the day in Wanamaker's own words. On Sunday morning he wrote:

I am too tired to go to church! What do you think of that for me! It was one o'clock before I got to bed. The Convention sat from 10 A.M. to 10:30 P.M., and I was not once out of the Hall. The strain of the four days was extreme. The uncertainty of the outcome, the shadow of a bolt of the Rooseveltians, and the bitterness and strife of the delegates on his side and their obstructions to everything done in the Convention, was wearing and trying for the twelve and a half continuous hours, especially when added to the eight and ten hour sessions of the previous days. At any hour the Convention might have broken up through the withdrawal of the opposition. As it was, the original pro-

<sup>1</sup> See J. Hampton Moore, *Roosevelt and the Old Guard*, p. 265. Mr. Moore was president of the National Republican League, then Congressman from Pennsylvania, and later Mayor of Philadelphia. In his spirited account of the Chicago Convention Mr. Moore calls attention to the fact that John Wanamaker was the first Republican to make "defense of the Constitution" a Republican campaign issue.

gram was carried through. Mr. Taft got by narrowly with a vote of 561—a margin of 19—542 being required for a majority. Vice-President Sherman was slated from the first for renomination.

It was considered as best politics for Taft not to change the old ticket in any way. If there had not been enough votes on the first ballot to elect, changes in the ticket would have been possible. But by hard sledding the original slate was put through. So there we are.

Now comes the fearful struggle. It seems to me almost impossible to elect the Taft ticket or Roosevelt, who jumped into the arena last night at midnight, and with the 343 delegates who refused to vote in the Convention nominated himself as a candidate and arranged to call a convention in August to organize a new Republican party. I do not believe Roosevelt can be elected, but by dividing the party he will prevent the election of Taft and open the way for a Democrat.

Wanamaker got away from Chicago on Sunday afternoon. Interviewed on his return to Philadelphia, he declared that it was "like warming up old coffee to discuss the convention," with "the Democratic Convention a fresh cup on the breakfast tables to-morrow." He noted the absence of "successors to the old mighty men of Republican conventions, such as Blaine and Mark Hanna." He continued:

The masters of the hour were Elihu Root, whose dignity and coolness, unruffled good nature and humor, in spite of great provocation, held the reins, taking care always to drive fairly and safely; Fairbanks, President Butler of Columbia University; Senators Burton and Hemingway; and William B. McKinley. There were many good men present who had never been to a convention before, and who, like myself, wanted to do their best but did not know how.

A colored delegate, of which there were sixty-six in the Convention, who had not taken part, said he had waited for the *zoölogical* moment. The noise, confusion and roars of the men who were in some degree accidents as delegates, kept up the features of a zoölogical garden for hours of each day. To be sure, the strain was very great for everyone, with the threats of bolting and riot by some of the Indians who were in the game to continue the excitement. The sessions were all long, and lasted twelve and a half hours at one sitting.

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The platform that was adopted is in many respects better than any former platform of any convention. It touches the problems of the day in a practical way and means what it says upon the subjects under discussion. I am sure the members of the Committee on Resolutions who framed the platform were intense in their sincerity to do something that would give standing room for the entire American people.

At the age of seventy-five it was hardly surprising that the "high jinks," as he himself called them, of a dash across the ocean, hurrying to Chicago by special train, putting all his heart into the convention, and then jumping back to Philadelphia and to work, could have had no aftermath. One of his bad colds caught him, and when he went to Bretton Woods, in the White Mountains, to join his wife, he found himself in for a long stage of illness. This prevented him from attending the President's reception at the White House on July 8 when, as President Taft put it, he and his friends "went into conference on the state of the Union." On July 29 Taft wrote to Bretton Woods:

I am very grateful to you, my dear Mr. Wanamaker, for all that you have done for me, and for your willingness to do more. I shall not hesitate to call upon you when you are restored physically. I hope your recovery may be both speedy and complete.

And again on September 18 the President wrote from Beverly, Mass.:

I am very sorry to hear of your physical condition, both because of your personal discomfort and because it deprives you of the opportunity to help us in this fight. I still hope that you may be able to give us the benefit of your judgment to put into operation the movement among the business men.

At the beginning of August Wanamaker had accepted the invitation of Chairman Hilles to be one of the sixteen members of a National Advisory Committee, and he had helped to organize and had contributed to the printing and circu-

lation of pamphlets by the Taft and Sherman Business Men's Committee. But he could not speak anywhere, and he had to restrict his correspondence. We find no letter to the National Committee until September 26, when he wrote to Chairman Hilles that "inasmuch as direct interference on the part of the employer is generally resented by the employee," the National Committee should ask business men to form committees of their own employees to urge upon their fellow-workmen "the importance of the Republican policy regarding tariff legislation not being interfered with." He added that he had given this advice to Hanna in 1896, and Hanna had appointed a special bureau for this "missionary work" in Chicago.

Wanamaker's great contribution to the 1912 campaign was the two letters given to the press on October 2 and October 28.

The first was addressed "To the merchants and business men of the United States," and was published all over the country. Wanamaker warned against free trade; recalled the Wilson tariff and the panic of 1893; asserted that the Republican party "can and will rightly revise the tariff"; and said that the country wanted no "whirligig administration of an unbalanced President." This first letter resulted in a deluge of letters of approval and condemnation. William T. Tilden, President of the Union League of Philadelphia, declared that it sounded the virile note of the campaign; and the Republican National Committee sent the letter in full, in plate form, to 3,000 newspapers.

The Democratic National Committee, in turn, circulated two answers to Wanamaker, one by E. A. Filene, of Boston, and the other by W. G. McAdoo, of New York. McAdoo went into the question of panics, and denied Wanamaker's argument that they were due to the tariff revisions of Democratic administrations. McAdoo stated:

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I admire his genius and personality, but deplore his lack of vision. He says himself that he is not a manufacturer, and this is painfully evident in his letter. Were he as familiar with industrial conditions as he is fluent about panics, he would speak with less confidence and more weight.

The second letter, released on October 28, 1912, was addressed to "my friends of fifty years, the men of the little kingdom of commerce, numbering upward of ten million strong within the United States." Wanamaker went into the reasons for the panics of 1893 and 1907 once more, with great detail, and attempted to answer his critics. He suggested a new Cabinet post—Secretary of Manufactures, Tariff and Customs—thus relieving "the heavily loaded Treasury Department." The letter bristled with epigrams, such as:

So far it seems that the cry for liberation is but a howl for power.

The Constitution has been tried and is not found wanting.

Can those who pay little or no taxes be the best judges of what is to the country's good?

A tariff panic is worse than any other because it is the death blow to industry and labor.

Will America ever be obliged to enact a poor rate tax, as in foreign countries, to take care of the unemployed? If we follow the direction of Baltimore we shall head that way.

I firmly believe that whoever fails to vote the Republican ticket will league himself against the permanent interests of the working people.

A properly adjusted tariff is the only certain foundation of business prosperity and of contented home life in the United States.

The second Wanamaker broadside worried the Democratic National Committee. Josephus Daniels, chairman of the Publicity Bureau, got William C. Redfield to make an answer to Wanamaker, point by point, which was spread over the country on the Saturday before election, with the imprint of the Democratic National Committee.<sup>1</sup> In his

<sup>1</sup> Wilson rewarded both Daniels and Redfield by giving them places in his cabinet.

covering telegram to newspaper editors Daniels charged Wanamaker with having spread the impression that "the election of Woodrow Wilson would be followed by a 'panic' and 'soup kitchens.'" On the West coast Claus A. Spreckels was enlisted to answer Wanamaker. The Spreckels letter, which the Democratic National Committee sent to every newspaper west of the Mississippi, stated that Wanamaker did not "think clearly" and was not "an economist."

The question of a protective tariff's rôle in the prosperity of the United States is one that will never be solved so long as it is put before the people and is considered by politicians as a party issue. Wanamaker was certainly not an economist. Nor were those who answered him. What theorists had to say on one side or the other would not have won headlines in the newspapers. If, as David H. Lane, the veteran Philadelphia politician wrote, E. A. Filene's answer to Wanamaker was "an attempt to refute experience by prediction," it is also true that Wanamaker himself may have failed to read rightly the lessons of his own long business career. However that may be, his pronouncement of the tariff issue as the dominant issue in the campaign was widely approved by Republicans and made the Democrats uneasy for the first time since the Roosevelt bolt.

The tariff issue—at the best—was an academic question, and aroused no bitterness. It was quite otherwise when Wanamaker described Roosevelt as "a madman trying to wrest the Presidency from the man who, in all fairness, should have Roosevelt's support," and when he declared that "Theodore Roosevelt should prefer to have his right hand cut off rather than to have penned the things he has written against Republicanism." On the very day of this speech Roosevelt was shot in Milwaukee. By telephone,

by wire, and by mail came protests to Wanamaker's office. One friend sent a copy of a card gotten out by the Philadelphia Wanamaker store, at the time of the thirty-second anniversary six years before, eulogizing Roosevelt, and marked it, "Lest we forget." Another wrote: "Say, John, you had better keep out of that political pot, or you'll get burnt." Others were puzzled, and there are thoughtful letters on file, pointing out that Wanamaker's past record in politics should have made him sympathetic to the Bull Moosers.

Some friends feared what was probably true, that personal friendship for Taft and too blind devotion to the Republican party had prevented Wanamaker from seeing what Roosevelt and his supporters were driving at. But, just as ten years before Roosevelt did not comprehend the significance and far-reaching importance of the great principles for which Wanamaker had been valiantly contending in Pennsylvania, in 1912 Wanamaker certainly failed to realize that in the Bull Moose movement there was a high political ideal of which Roosevelt, in this last campaign of his career, was the sincere exponent.<sup>1</sup> It was a tragic fatality that these two men should at different times have so completely misunderstood each other.

Wanamaker, however, saw only two things—that he might help a friend and that he might save the country from disaster that he felt would inevitably follow a drastic

<sup>1</sup> In his *Twenty-five Years: 1892-1916*, (ii, 139-140) Lord Grey publishes a letter from Roosevelt, dated November 15, 1912, in which there occurs this striking passage: "We Progressives were fighting for elementary social and industrial justice, and we had with us the great majority of the practical idealists of the country. But we had against us both the old political organizations, and 99 per cent of the corporate wealth of the country, and therefore the great majority of the newspapers. Moreover, we were not able to reach the hearts of the materialists, or stir the imagination of the well-meaning, somewhat sodden, men who lack wisdom and prefer to travel in a groove. We were fought by the Socialists as bitterly as by the representatives of the two old parties, and this for the very reason that we stand equally against government by a plutocracy and government by a mob."

reduction of the tariff. And he was confirmed in what he saw by three letters from President Taft during the month of October. On October 16, William Howard Taft wrote:

I cannot tell you how much you have helped in the matter of bringing about a revolution of feeling on the general issues and a movement toward me by the business men of the country, and those wage-earners who have intelligence and discrimination enough to understand the basis of prosperity.

Again on October 21:

I want to thank you for the splendid work you are doing for the success of the Republican party in the approaching election. I thank you not for myself alone, but for the people at large who have so much to lose, so little to gain, from a change of Administration. . . . I cannot understand how any American voter can fail to see that by throwing away his vote on a third party, or by voting to put the Democrats in power, in the White House and in Congress, he is as surely courting disaster as is the small child playing with matches. And so, Mr. Wanamaker, far above any personal consideration, I am grateful to you and to all who, like you, are helping the Republican cause this year.

And on October 28:

I have read what you say in the morning paper. I cannot conceive of any statements from any other source that will so rouse the business community as your forcible and illuminating statements.

That the President's opinion of the value of Wanamaker's services was shared by other prominent Republicans became evident when Vice-President Sherman died a week before election. The Washington correspondents of the *New York Times* and *New York Herald* both telegraphed on October 31 that influential members of the Republican National and Advisory Committees were impressed with the wisdom of giving to Wanamaker the party's nomination for second place on the ticket. It had been intimated at the White House that Wanamaker was acceptable to the President. On November 1 Congressman

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J. Hampton Moore, Pennsylvania State Chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee, wrote to National Chairman Hilles suggesting that the National Committee be immediately convened for the purpose of nominating John Wanamaker as the party's candidate for Vice-President.

The resolution of the Chicago Convention had given this power to the National Committee. But it was not essential to substitute a new name for Sherman's before the election, because under the Constitution only the Electoral College is chosen by the people. Had the Republican party carried a majority of the Electoral College in November, it would have been possible to indicate a new vice-presidential candidate at any time before the Electoral College met. The time was too short to substitute another name on the ballots throughout the country. Wanamaker telegraphed Taft that "infinitely better for the East would be Justice Hughes, who would help to carry New York and other states, while for us in Pennsylvania the name of Governor Edwin S. Stuart would add thousands of votes to the Taft ticket." But he heartily concurred in the decision to wait until after election, and wrote to his friends:

I regard the talk about the Vice-Presidency like the south wind, which I gratefully accept, but without any further meaning for my life.

Of course it is always wise to fight and hope. But Wanamaker was too well informed to have believed in even the remote possibility of Taft's re-election. Gordon Bennett had told him that there was not "the ghost of a chance." In his diary we find, on November 6:

Well, the stormy war is settled. How hateful to many states to drive them off from their old party of glorious history, and rather than trust themselves to Nero Roosevelt, throw in their lot with the untariffsafe

Democrats. Pity of Pities. Now then—after the next 4th of March look out for squalls.

And to the successful candidate he wired:

There is a citizenship above party and an old personal friendship for you that calls out this expression of good will with the assurance of my earnest support for all good work you do as President of our great country.

Ten days later Wanamaker went from New York to Philadelphia in the President's car, and this gave rise to gossip that he would be appointed to succeed the late White-law Reid as Ambassador to Great Britain until the Wilson inauguration "as a compliment to a distinguished citizen." Wanamaker denied the rumor. President Taft made no appointment, and felt that he ought to leave even the settlement of international questions of pressing importance, such as Mexico, to his successor.

The last mention of the presidential campaign of 1912—and the disappointment it brought—is on March 4, 1913, when Wanamaker wrote:

The first entry under the reign of a Democratic President. May it be happy and prosperous for the country! But I am unpatriotic enough to want a habitation in Sicily or Italy for the next four years!

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE STORE FAMILY

THE title of this chapter speaks volumes. It was John Wanamaker's term for his employees. From the first days of Oak Hall he told those who worked for him that they represented him. In whatever capacity they served, they came into contact with customers, or had in their hands the interests of customers; and upon how they treated customers depended the merchant's most precious asset, good will. "The first fifteen years of my business life," Wanamaker once said, "were largely devoted to building up a sales force that understood and expressed my business principles, and ever since it has been my principal preoccupation. The Store family is myself multiplied thousands fold."

When we recall the story of the early days and of the development of Oak Hall and the first Chestnut Street store, and when we turn back to Wanamaker's talk to his people on the opening day of the Grand Depot, we realize how true this statement is.<sup>1</sup> Surrounding himself exclusively with the Wanamaker quality of helpers was of vital importance. As the business grew and hundreds became thousands, the problem was more difficult. But Wanamaker solved it because he knew that it was a problem, and because he made it his business to know how his people represented him. He felt that he could never afford to neglect any opportunity for personal contact with all the members of

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 168-9.

the store family.<sup>1</sup> He studied the human material factor in storekeeping with the minute care with which he studied merchandise, display, advertising, and all forms of service to customers. He was able to express himself in his buildings and their stocks, and to create an atmosphere of personality in his business, because of the discriminating selection of his employees and of the *esprit de corps* he was able to instill and sustain in the store family. He knew this, and he never tired saying it.

The first employees and associates were friends or friends of friends or came to him with personal recommendations from friends. He knew all about them and their home life. He watched them, and if they did not fit in they went elsewhere. Upon this nucleus he built his personnel, considering no applicant that "would not feel at home in the store family." His men and boys had to have what he called early in his career "essential qualities"—honesty, loyalty, good taste, enthusiasm, and native intelligence. When women began to seek employment in shops after the Civil War, a decade passed before Wanamaker could use many of them; for until 1877 he dealt in men's and boys' wear. The new kind of store, branching out into different fields, most of which had to do exclusively with women, led him to begin to add to the store family more and more women. It was difficult to get the right kind, and he welcomed those who came from the homes of his men employees or who were recommended by them. He insisted that they have the same background of home environment as his men.

General storekeeping demands an unusually high class of helpers. They cannot be taken on like factory hands or like clerks whose work is done behind the scenes in large

<sup>1</sup> His habit of going out "on the floor" aided greatly in the contact. See above, vol. ii, pp. 36, 45; and below, p. 443. When he was in his office he was always accessible to employees.

corporations and wholesale houses. Because they are always in contact with the public there must be back of them homes in which have been instilled habits of personal cleanliness and fastidiousness and taste in dress; they must know how to speak English, if not without accent, at least idiomatically and with attention to grammar; and they must have the courtesy and good manners that are learned only at home. These standards, set for men and women alike when the new kind of store threw open its doors in 1877, were maintained throughout the years that followed. But as the business grew beyond the dreams of its founder and the little family became a veritable army, finding recruits became increasingly difficult.

During the first decade of the rise of the general store, had the specialty shops been put out of business, as was often charged, Wanamaker and other general storekeepers would have had the pick of trained helpers who knew how to handle different lines and who had lost their jobs through the failure of the small storekeeper to compete with "the octopus." But only those specialty storekeepers who failed to study and adjust themselves to new conditions went out of business; others took their places. There was no glut of trained salesmen and saleswomen on the market, and the problem of personnel was the hardest the developers of general stores had to solve. Those who applied for positions in the new kind of store during the decade from 1877 to 1887 contained a fair percentage of applicants acquainted with retail merchandising and able to handle goods over the counter. After 1887 adding to the sales force in any other way than by getting young people and training them was not only an annoyance, but was also harmful to the interests of the business. Frequently there were people who had all that could be desired in a cultural sense, and whose recommendations were splendid, but they were not fitted

for anything in particular and wanted a job simply because they had to work for a living and the general store seemed to be the line of least resistance for the unskilled and inexperienced worker.<sup>1</sup>

By the time the store family in Philadelphia reached three thousand, which was in the early 1880's, Wanamaker felt the imperative necessity of establishing contributory agencies within the store, not only for helping his people put a firm financial foundation under their feet by savings and by provision for illness and death, but also for schooling and for special training and discipline.<sup>2</sup> Community interests, social and economic, led to contact and co-operation among members of the store family outside business hours. Wanamaker did not often take the initiative—he was not a paternalist; but he hailed with enthusiasm and satisfaction, and did his part to help along, every new organization. The societies and clubs contributed to increase the good qualities and effectiveness of the store family as much as to its health and happiness.

But Wanamaker felt rightly that these agencies would be helpful only if they had good material to work on. In employing people he remembered his own constant cry to those responsible for the merchandise, "You've got to have

<sup>1</sup> When the New York store force was being organized in 1896, Mr. Ogden said that it was pathetic to realize how many of the applicants were without special qualifications for any particular branch of the business; to one man or woman who knew how to do some one thing, there were at least fifty who stated in their applications that they were willing to do anything. It was not that they were the jack-of-all-trades type, but that they had never had any training or experience in retail merchandising.

Wanamaker expressed this thought in the foreword to the *Williamson School Annual* in 1913 as follows: "The world seems to be filled with men who can do 'most anything.' And it is not exaggerating to say that employers have more difficulty in facing this class of labor than any other—frequently with small satisfaction to both parties. It often happens that the man who says he can do 'most anything' turns out to be the man who cannot do anything specific."

<sup>2</sup> For savings fund, building and loan associations, and life insurance, see vol. ii, chap. xvi; for mercantile education in the store see vol. ii, chap. xix.

the goods!" So with younger as well as with older recruits, he tried to see that only those worth educating and training were admitted to the store family. His kind heart often made him take on and keep inefficient employees. But as a general rule he remembered—and asked his associates to remember—the proverb about the sow's ear and the silk purse.

The result of constant watchfulness in recruiting was the maintenance of the homogeneity of the store family in Philadelphia despite its growth. In New York Wanamaker began his mercantile career when there were still left men and women of the Stewart period and when it was possible, though not easy, to recruit a fine type of young people. And in choosing and handling personnel there was behind him thirty-five years of experience. In both cities, then, Wanamaker succeeded in building up a great organization of men and women, boys and girls, devoted to him personally, imbued with his ideas of service and courtesy, and with the intelligence and training to represent him worthily to the customers.

The homogeneity was a necessity. Without it Wanamaker could not have created the atmosphere that came to be associated distinctively with his stores, and he could not have made many thousands co-operate with him in creating and increasing and retaining a good will that was matchless in the mercantile field.

Every employer of labor is eager for good material. He tries his best to get it. But factories, wholesale establishments, and offices of large corporations, where the work is mechanical to a large extent and where the workers do not come into personal contact with clients, are not dependent upon how their employees represent them. Wanamaker was. He had to find a certain kind of people to work for him, or he could not have begun and developed his mer-

chandising principles. What he needed he succeeded in finding. The limitation in qualified applicants handicapped the employment department. But it prevented, after the flood of the foreign-born, any serious modification in the racial and cultural background of the store family.

For certain kinds of work, such as running elevators and restaurant service, the best class of colored people was employed.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the vast army, in cities the character of whose population changed radically during his lifetime, Wanamaker kept dominantly of northern European stock. It was as remarkable a feat as any of those that won him laurels. At the beginning he had his Bethany associations to thank for being able to do it. Later he was able to introduce educational features and to offer conditions of work that appealed with peculiar force to the kind of people he wanted in his employ.

Gathered from a background of long residence in America and coming from homes where "the fear of God, order, and industry reigned" (we are quoting Wanamaker), the people that surrounded him were of English, Scotch, Irish, German—and to a lesser extent Scandinavian and French—forebears. These men and women shared his standards of truthfulness, his abhorrence of deceit, and his contempt for

<sup>1</sup> The colored employees of John Wanamaker organized in New York in 1911, and in Philadelphia a year later. They called themselves the Robert Curtis Ogden Association, in honor of the man who had done so much for their race and whom they had been proud to call one of their bosses. The New York Club made a place for itself in musical circles, with its jubilee singers, chorus, quartette, band, and orchestra. It gained more than local prominence by its relay team and sprint runners. The Philadelphia Club, much to Wanamaker's delight, developed a crack band, for which Wanamaker provided a professional leader, who gives full time to teaching music in the store and training the men. The chorus gives recitals. The band plays in the organ loft every week, and has won the Rodman Wanamaker cup for colored bands twice, once with 15th N. Y. Regiment Band as runner up, and another time in competition with the Jack Thomas Band of Baltimore and the Elks Band of New York. The associations have held dances in the stores, and their annual picnics are attended by thousands. Wanamaker enjoyed going to the Ogden Club entertainments, and when he could not get there he wrote letters which they prize highly.

the sloven and slacker. They knew the things that Wanamaker wouldn't do; for they wouldn't do them themselves. They understood the meaning of the old motto: "*Noblesse oblige.*"

In the early days of the general store Wanamaker gave personal attention to applications for jobs. He interviewed the applicants, with an associate by his side, and trained his aide to size up people. A pretty girl, whose dainty complexion would set off any veiling mesh, wanted to sell veils. Without hesitation she was refused. After she went out Wanamaker said: "A finger showed through her glove, and bits of silk or ravelings hung from her petticoat below her dress. We don't want a careless girl handling our stock. She would not keep the veilings in order any more than she keeps the rents sewed in her gloves and her skirt lining." Invariably, in a case like this where there was slovenliness, Wanamaker laid the fault to lack of home training.

To one who wrote, asking what were the qualifications for a position at the Grand Depot, Wanamaker answered: "Conscience, brains, manners." Possession of the last quality could be pretty well gauged in an interview, and he was willing to assume possession of the first from the recommendations and the answers to questions. As for brains, one had to wait and see.

Wanamaker expected a lot of everybody. He never seemed surprised or especially gratified when members of his store family were doing things exceptionally well. He believed that a man's best was no more than he ought to do all the time; and when people were given responsibility it was taken for granted that they would always "hit the bull's eye."<sup>1</sup> They would not have been chosen otherwise. Wanamaker said:

<sup>1</sup> Isaac D. Shearer was put into the lower Chestnut Street store as financial man when the business was launched in 1869. Shortly after the opening, one of John Wanamaker's brothers gave a sight draft for goods to the

One who has the faculty for right selection of responsible subordinates needs also that wise sense of justice and appreciation which accords unstinted scope of action and generous recognition of results.

Wanamaker had a genius for delegating authority and for "according unstinted scope of action." His "wise sense of justice" taught him early in life that men put on their mettle and made responsible for big things in the business should have the joy of a free hand. "Use your own judgment" was the response that did more than any other one thing to establish the *esprit de corps* of the Wanamaker store family.

On the other hand, when most people showed only mediocre ability, Wanamaker did not storm around and berate them for their mistakes. He was as quick to accept as he was to detect limitations. He was marvelously patient with the occasional stupidity of the ordinary run of folks. For instance, when he was showing a Japanese visitor around the store, he overheard an aisle man misdirecting a customer. He stopped and called his attention to the error. The Japanese afterward expressed surprise that Wanamaker had not scolded the man; for he had observed the usual way of Occidentals in handling the mistakes of others.

"I have no time to scold," answered Wanamaker, "and I learned thirty years ago that it was foolish to scold. I have enough trouble overcoming my own limitations without fretting over the fact that God has not seen fit to distribute generously the gift of intelligence."

There was a flash of approval and admiration in the eyes of the visitor. He promptly urged upon the American

amount of \$5,000, and forgot to tell Shearer about it. When it was presented, John Wanamaker simply said, "That is up to you, Mr. Shearer." Shearer had to find the money—without help from anyone. More than a month later John Wanamaker mentioned it for the first time. "By the way," he said, "what became of that sight draft?" Shearer answered, "I met it," without telling how. Wanamaker commented, "I knew you would," and did not then or afterward inquire how.

merchant a visit to the Far East, assuring him that he would be appreciated as a philosopher.

Wanamaker's self-control and acceptance of others' limitations, however, had in it nothing of condescension. Never in his life did Wanamaker "My man" any one. "Pride goeth before a fall" was a favorite text of his; and he once said that pride was a mantle to cover ignorance or inferiority. It is natural for men of like economic position and of like intellectual equipment to seek and find their enjoyment in one another's company. But Wanamaker seemed to be sincerely friends with everybody. The possession of money and power—even the possession of brains—made little impression upon him. He liked people for themselves, and his best friends were those who liked him for himself. His friends could be anything or nothing in the business and intellectual world; and he thought none the less of those who did not possess the qualities that made for success, so long as they were loyal and enthusiastic in their work. Those of his store family who knew him well—and they were legion who thought that they did—were sure that his interest in them was not measured by their attainments or their place in the store; and they loved him for it. Working for him meant partnership with him in maintaining the principles he had instilled into them. They would never leave him. They didn't just have a "job"; theirs was a real career.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thousands of letters in the files bear witness to this. The most striking testimony, however, is in the record of length of service attained by the Philadelphia store, which, while it may not be unique, is certainly unusual in the United States. Many hundreds who came as boys and girls and who grew up with the business never quit to go to any other place, and grew gray in the service of the store. One old employee wrote in 1909: "Your thoughtfulness in providing for the pensioning of your old employees has given me the enjoyment of a fixed income sufficient to take care of me for the little time of life left for me, and seems to me one of the kindest acts of any man in the history of the mercantile business." In 1922 a woman wrote:

Because he regarded patience as the virtue *par excellence* of people who spend their lives selling things to women, he required it of his people. He set the example. He used to tell the store family that while they were tempted to explosions of wrath by unreasonableness on the part of customers, he had that to cope with, and inefficiency on the part of employees to boot. But no more were all customers unreasonable than were all employees inefficient! He cultivated the virtue of patience by counting his blessings, which were very great—so were theirs! This is the gist of a hundred talks to salespeople over a period of fifty years. Wanamaker once said that the merchant had to learn three things: that most people were reasonable; that most employees worked well and willingly; and that only the man who was patient with his employees could get them to be patient with customers.

But patience was only one of the twin jewels in the crown of successful Wanamaker salespeople. Courtesy was the other. After all, Wanamaker told his people, patience was only a negative virtue, "the exercise of an inhibition that any animal could be taught." Courtesy, on the other hand, was a positive virtue. He called it "the unwearied practice of the Golden Rule." Just being good or kindly or agreeable did not make a person courteous. Courtesy required quick thinking and initiative. The importance of courtesy could not be overemphasized, Wanamaker declared. In every human relation courtesy is expected, and yet, although expected, it is appreciated; but when it is not

"I want to try to express my love and appreciation for you as the head of our business family. My health has gone and through your kindness I have been retired from the store. The twenty-nine years I was there were years of happiness. You have made it possible for me still to enjoy years of life that would not have been possible but for this release from business." At intervals, generally anniversaries, Wanamaker gave souvenirs for long employment—watches and medals.

shown, nothing arouses resentment more quickly. What an asset to salespeople! How indispensable! <sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker's philosophy of patience and courtesy grew out of the nature of the man. It was not difficult for him to be agreeable to employees and customers alike; his courtesy was innate and his kindness instinctive; and he never had spells of going off by himself. After his death one of his oldest employees was asked, "Did Mr. Wanamaker often come out of his shell?" "I never saw him in it," was the answer.

Sometimes Wanamaker called himself "the pilot on the bridge," and felt that he was responsible for "steering safely a ship of fifty-odd thousand souls." In the store

<sup>1</sup> From 1911 until the year of his death John Wanamaker wrote an annual "Courtesy Card." These were placed around the store and were distributed to the store family and friends in miniature form. They were in the form of the store editorials. The theme was that "the best commodity under this roof should be a full stock of Courtesy," and that the members of the store family, having been "well brought up," could always be courteous if they made a thoughtful effort. Wanamaker said that if you "spend yourself in courtesy the more you will have left," and that courtesy was "the unspoken truth of gentleness, and good manners go with it."

Civility costs little but  
Counts much  
yet Courtesy counts more  
John Wanamaker

family he thought always of those who were dependent upon them. The responsibility for their economic well-being "always keeps me prayerful," as he put it. Their safety, he believed, depended upon his steering.

But most often he thought of himself as a general in command of an army "fighting the battle of life." They were making a living, yes, but the store family had a higher goal and one worthy of the best they could put into their work—the goal of service, of stamping indelibly the mercantile world with the highest principles of square dealing, of intelligent and original merchandising, and of molding public taste. "We help people to shop wisely, getting a dollar's value for every dollar spent; but we also inspire and influence them to wear good things and to have the right things in their homes, and that leads to higher thinking and higher living. What more glorious profession than ours?" he told his store family in 1879. In almost the same language he kept the dignity and responsibility of their calling before them—and what he called "the higher ideal than merely making money"—throughout his life. The first public expression of the idea we find in the *Philadelphia Store News*, September, 1883:

While it is true that customers know what they want, oftentimes they do not get it because ignorant and injudicious salespeople persuade them to take what is on hand, or more desirable to sell. It is hard to overcome old habits of trade. Our plan is to provide a full stock of everything, so there is no excuse for pawning off substitutes, and to educate our clerks to conscientiousness in serving customers with what they ought to have. It should be a study of every salesperson to prevent a customer from buying any article that is unsuitable or unserviceable.

"It should be a study!" These five words express the attitude of John Wanamaker toward every problem, large and small, that confronted him from boyhood to old age. He had been a general storekeeper six years, and his store

family had grown to nearly three thousand, when he realized that it was an essential part of the merchant's job to stimulate his employees to study and to provide them with the means of acquiring a solid mercantile education. His adventures in this field are told in another chapter.

But the general of an army (it was U. S. Grant who put this simile into John Wanamaker's head) had other things to consider in connection with his soldiers than simply efficiency through education. Efficiency had also to do with morale and physical well-being. Wanamaker did not like the word efficiency. There was too much of the impersonal, of the machine in it; and the conception of efficiency as expounded by those who made the word popular and characteristic of American business, was repugnant to him. He did not use the word. The nearest he got to it was "efficient service," but on reflection he dropped the adjective.

Service was the keynote word of his mercantile career; and upon it he built the principles that revolutionized the spirit and methods of retailing in the United States. When he told his store family that the Prince of Wales was to be envied for the glorious motto of his coat of arms, and spoke of serving as a privilege as well as a duty, of an opportunity as well as a responsibility, he declared that as they served the public so would he be able to serve them. In the last decade of his life he wrote, "It has always been my belief that the business owes more to its employees than the mere opportunity of making a living."<sup>1</sup>

At the seventy-sixth birthday dinner in the Philadelphia store on July 13, 1914, an executive said:

Within these walls you reared a family to aid you, in every sense of the word loyal and faithful to the utmost, and what you have done for them in making their tasks lighter will inure to the benefit of the working classes and the employed classes throughout the civilized world.

<sup>1</sup> *The Independent*, New York, November 30, 1914.

What had John Wanamaker done?

The answer would fill volumes. Out of a wealth of material we can mention only a few things in which Wanamaker was a pioneer.

When Oak Hall was opened retail storekeeping was a slave's life for employer and employee alike. The regular store hours were from eight to six, although many places opened at seven. On busy days the clerks were expected to work extra hours putting stock in place. During the fortnight before Christmas stores kept open supposedly until 10 P.M., but really long after that. There were no seats behind the counters. Conversation between clerks was punished by discharge. There were no discounts and no lockers. In England it was the custom for clerks, or "assistants," to be lodged and boarded by the employer, who exacted service in the store or with the stocks that took all of the employee's time. Instead of being free and willing helpers, contributing their share of personality to the business, the employees were bound by routine and their every action was prescribed by a book of rules.

Into this grind Wanamaker had himself entered at the age of fourteen, and before he was twenty his health gave way under the strain of long hours. When he started business for himself, he was determined to shorten store hours. The first step in this direction was taken at Oak Hall in 1862, when overtime for arranging the stock was done away with for salesmen; and a ten-hour day was set for cutters and hands in the tailoring shop. In the first summer of the Grand Depot, on July 18, 1876, Wanamaker announced: "A vacation with pay is extended to all employees of six months' service." Ten years later, after the question of a Saturday half-holiday had been discussed for several years without agreement being reached among merchants, Wanamaker decided to go ahead alone. On

April 29, 1886, his advertisement carried an announcement that quickly forced others to follow his example and led to a nation-wide innovation. The statement read:

The Saturday half-holiday has got to be settled. After July 4 we shall close at one o'clock on Saturday afternoons during the summer.

It took nearly thirty years to educate the public to earlier closing hours during weekdays, shutting down on national holidays, abolishing Saturday evening hours the year round, and the "barbarous custom" (the expression is Wanamaker's) of evening hours during the month preceding Christmas, and to closing from Friday evening to Monday morning during July and August. One by one these ameliorations were secured—always with John Wanamaker in the vanguard. His unique position, as one of the largest employers in both Philadelphia and New York, enabled him to force the issue, as he had done in 1886.

In 1917, when Wanamaker announced the ten full Saturday holidays in the summer in addition to two weeks vacation, he said:

One of this store's blossoms is the holidays, which for forty years have been given to its workers in Philadelphia since the Centennial year and in New York during all the years since we began here in 1896.

When the government begged for the co-operation of business men to save coal during the World War, John Wanamaker decided on still shorter hours, and announced that his establishments would open at 10 A.M. and close at 4:30 P.M. This led to a letter from an old friend and employee:

I have read your morning notice that business is to begin in the middle of the morning and that it will stop in the middle of the afternoon. I can hardly believe it. I remember when you and all the rest of us came to the store at 7; and when you kept store first it was not closed until 7 in the evening. The next thing you did was to close your store

at 6 o'clock. Nobody complained about the long hours, because the thousands of little stores in the city, where the family lived in the same house, kept open until 10 at night.

There were no rules about Saturdays, excepting that the store had to be closed before it struck 12 midnight. Everybody kept open. It was understood by the public that 10 P.M. was closing time, but most stores waited for later customers. It is your New Kind of Store that worked miracles. You shortened hours from time to time. You began the Saturday half holidays, and the entire holiday was unknown until you began it. You led in the later opening at 8:30, and closing at 6; then at 5:30, and recently at 5 o'clock. Of course I am an old man now. But I have seen all these changes go on, and as I ride past your store in the car and look out and think of the changes, I have to stop at your name and give you the credit for what you have done in bringing this about. Store people now have time for home and recreation. It seems too good to be true.

Wanamaker answered:

Thank you, dear old friend. What you have said is all true, but it isn't due to the storekeeper alone. It is the people themselves that are educating themselves to consider those who serve them; and they are willing to arrange their time and make their purchases between shorter hours. Nothing that has occurred for a long time pleases us more than to see the readiness with which the public has accepted our Broadside Advertisement fixing the shorter hours. The world is coming to understand that there is more in life than just the grind. None who believes that, and who has the power to help people to a richer life, can fail to use his influence to make life happier for all.

All that Wanamaker did, as the Grand Depot grew, to improve the physical equipment of his store was even more of a boon to his employees than to customers. Electric lights in 1878, followed by elevators and electric ventilation in 1882, revolutionized the life of those who had to spend their days behind counters. To lessen labor, transfers were introduced in 1878, and after a year of experimenting pneumatic cash carriers, in September, 1880, did away with the wearisome journey to the cashier that had

accompanied every purchase. The store was adequately heated. Ice water, lockers and rest rooms, and a restaurant added to the comfort of the store family.

It was the growth of Wanamaker's from 700 employees to 3,300 in less than six years that created a problem for the founder of the business. He had to devise means for preserving the family feeling; and he knew that he could not allow his now vast establishment to continue to grow without constant co-ordination in all its parts. Just as he had done in his Sunday school, when it grew rapidly, he did in his store. He got his people together frequently to talk to them. He mingled with them. He encouraged the establishment of organizations for savings and insurance, for the study of store problems, for social intercourse. He determined that the store family should remain a family, and this led him to father the formation of clubs and societies that would foster the spirit of solidarity and community of interests.

It is impossible to mention the many store organizations in Philadelphia and New York, and the facilities and encouragement given to these by the founder of the business. They are impressive in their number and variety, and some of them have profoundly influenced—helped to bring about would be a better phrase—the changes of the last generation in the relations between employers and employees. Just to give one instance of the recognition of this fact, a leading authority of retail merchandising in the United States, after citing the tables and rules of the Wanamaker Mutual Insurance Association as “a fine type of sick and death benefit organization,” has written:

In the development of great movements to advance the interests of their employees the progressive department stores of the country have always led. John Wanamaker in his Philadelphia and New York stores, Marshall Field in Chicago, and William Filene's Sons Co. in Boston, are

well-known concerns that present the highest type of organization for the individual and social betterment of employees, entirely aside from the regular work of the store. Such an effort would be quite impossible for a small store.<sup>1</sup>

But in the development of store organizations, Wanamaker enjoyed a unique advantage, not only because of the size of his business, but because he had equally large stores in cities only two hours apart. This made possible the best sort of competition inside the family. Philadelphia tried to get ahead of New York, and New York ahead of Philadelphia. From the first and formative years this friendly rivalry, encouraged in every way, added to the zest of participation in the activities of the organizations. There grew up constant interchange of visits and annual contests.

We speak of the cadets of the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute in relating Wanamaker's adventures in mercantile education. For the older employees, men and women, were established the Millrose Athletic Association in New York and the Meadowbrook Athletic Association in Philadelphia, named for the country homes of Wanamaker's sons. These two clubs, whose membership is limited to full-time employees of John Wanamaker, have won an unusual place in amateur sports. The Millrose Club, with its house, grounds, and swimming beach at Bath Beach, forged to the front in baseball, basketball, swimming, skating, shooting, and golf competition around New York. Its indoor track meets have achieved international fame. They grew in popular favor until Madison Square Garden was filled for two days to watch amateur athletes gathered from

<sup>1</sup> Nystrom, *Economics of Retailing*, pp. 155-156. The opportunities of the large business to contribute to the advancement of its employees are emphasized in John Wanamaker's address at the second annual meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, published in the *Annals*, May, 1900, and in his testimony before the Federal Industrial Commission on Conditions of Labor, on December 9, 1899.

all over the world. Members of the Millrose A. A. have won more than seventy-five national championships in field and track athletics. The Meadowbrook A. A., with its athletic field by the Schuylkill and its running track and tennis courts on top of the Philadelphia store, refused to yield anything to its rival in New York. Its indoor carnivals have gathered as many laurels as those of the Millrose Club; and its members have participated in the breaking and equaling of several world's records.<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker had the joy of a child in the success of store organizations. We find in his diary vivid accounts of visits to the outdoor meets of the two athletic clubs; evenings in the store gymnasium; races and matches attended on the roof of the Philadelphia store; and—up to the end of his life—evenings in both stores at entertainments and concerts given by his store family. He and his sons helped start the organizations, aided them financially, carried them through difficulties, and, above all, gave them the encouragement of their presence. How much the activities of the store family were on the veteran merchant's mind in the latter years of his life is shown by the correspondence in the private files. On May 18, 1921, he telegraphed to his son:

Our Meadowbrook Club ought not to go down. We spent years on organization and got a reputation. I like the old name that belonged to Thomas, and I want to keep it up; but I am quite interested in buying a farm, not too far away from Camden, with an old house on it. If we can't find anything there, perhaps we could at Chester. We have got

<sup>1</sup> The Meadowbrook Club girls' team equaled the world's record for 440 yards relay outdoors on two occasions, and now holds the world's indoor record. In 1919 fifteen thousand people, guests of the Meadowbrook A. A., on the roof of the Wanamaker store, saw William T. Tilden II win the men's singles in the Middle States Covered Court Tennis Tournament. In the last year of John Wanamaker's life the Meadowbrook Club won 12 of its 16 cross-country meets and 9 of its 13 track and field meets. It holds 19 National A. A. U. championships, and the 200-meter Olympic championship.

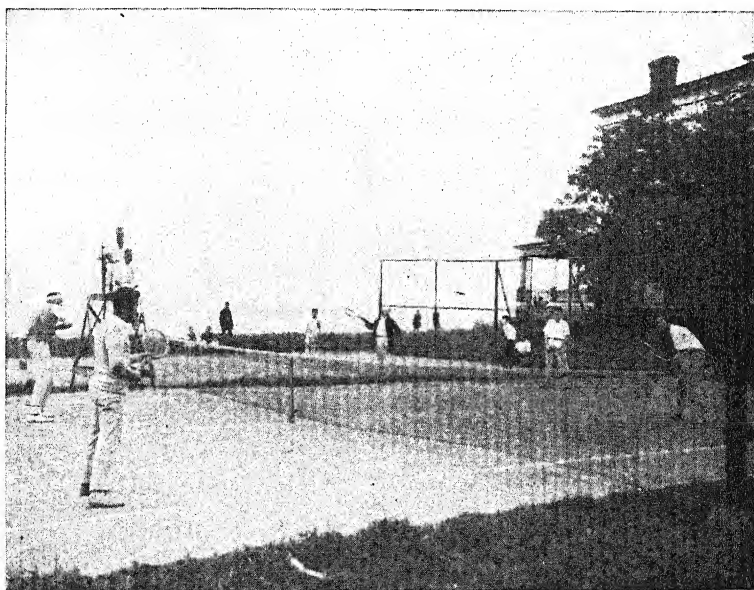
to do something here to take the edge off of the drudgery of the long days.

Solicitude for the physical well-being of his store family led John Wanamaker to establish a Medical Department in 1906, to which ample space was given in the new buildings which were just being completed. A Medical Director was appointed in the Philadelphia store. Very quickly the staff of the stores grew to a consulting physician, two medical directors, an assistant physician, specialists for nose, throat, ear, and eyes, three dentists, two chiropodists, trained nurses, and office assistants. Rest rooms, clinics, and medical care, with adequate equipment, for the physical well-being of employees are now a part of the organization of most large establishments in the mercantile and manufacturing world. But when Wanamaker inaugurated them they were virtually unknown—except in the experimental stage—in American mercantile life. Store people looked after themselves as best they could, and when they were too sick to work they went home. It was Wanamaker's conception of a store family that made him feel that under the roof of his stores should be a hospital clinic for the thousands working there. It was not until he had his new buildings, however, that it was possible to realize this dream.

The Medical Department, catching the spirit of the Wanamaker organization, was not content with filling a purely negative rôle, ministering to people after they fell ill. It struck out aggressively as an agency of instruction in personal hygiene and in the protection of all against sickness and accident. Wanamaker was keenly interested in having applicants for positions examined, so that none would be taken in and put to tasks beyond their strength or injurious to their health. More than once we find reference in the diaries to this department's statistics of the physical development of the younger employees; and the Medical



MILLROSE A. A. BUILDING



MILLROSE A. A. TENNIS COURTS



Director's occasional recommendations of measures to promote hygiene are mentioned with approval.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to his attitude toward his store family and his relations with them, Wanamaker said in a campaign speech in Pennsylvania in 1897:

"Upon the payroll of our firm are nearly 8,000 people, whose wages range annually from \$20,000 each to the boys at \$250. We have employed more than 100,000 persons, and have never had a strike or a threatened strike. We are never obliged to seek workers, but only to choose from the 5,000 people who apply to our Employment Department every month. Our house has for years maintained a pension roll for aged and worthy employees; and a system of weekly benefits, absolutely controlled by the employees themselves, to be paid in case of sickness and death, has paid more than \$100,000. Length of service is rewarded by increase of salary, other things being equal. I believe we pay the highest average wages of any large mercantile house in America, and for thirty-six years, since our business began, we have not defaulted an instant in the wages of our employees."

Wanamaker still had more than a quarter of a century ahead of him during which his business was going to double and his scale of wages largely increase. But with two large stores, instead of one, and in different cities, the record from 1897 to 1922 was as clear as from 1861 to 1897. When Wanamaker died, probably a quarter of a million people had been in his employ and he had engaged in the multitude of businesses that go to make up the activity of a general store. And yet it could be written of him, "He never had a strike."

At no time in his life was there anything impersonal or

<sup>1</sup> See *Safeguards and Aids to the Health and Well-being of Employees: The John Wanamaker Stores, Philadelphia and New York.*

machine-like in Wanamaker's relations with his store family. Admission to Wanamaker's, once it became a great establishment, was solely through the employment office, and the head of the business did not take any part in engaging workers, except executives. But once a person had been admitted to the store family, and was retained permanently, he never had occasion to feel that he was simply a cog in the machine. Success and happiness came to him in measure as he felt that he had his essential part in the business. Wanamaker impressed upon all who worked for him the fact that the service was mutual and the interest mutual. It was a thought that was expressed in speeches, in messages, in personal contacts, over and over again.

On the other hand, he avoided the paternal attitude. He knew that he had created and was carrying an organization that gave many thousands the opportunity of making a living and of finding social contacts and recreation and a liberal education in his store; but he was not bestowing benefits. There was a *quid pro quo*. For good service Wanamaker gave good wages. The favorable conditions under which the store family worked, the attention paid to their physical well-being, and what they received from membership in the store family were not a part of their compensation. They were the normal activities of people whose common interests threw them together in various forms of association, and Wanamaker's rôle was simply to help them develop and make fruitful these extra-business activities.

Wanamaker was too strong an individualist to work out any scheme of partnership with the men around him. He was never willing to share profits or responsibility except as he saw fit and fair under the circumstances of the moment. Bonuses, percentages, delegated authority, yes, but no contracts binding himself or others. The evidence is overwhelming that he never entertained the idea—

although it was frequently suggested to him—of the radical readjustment of his business on another basis.

He did not have to do so. His conception of relation of employer to employee worked. Able men were always found to help him conduct his growing business, men inspired with his ideals and proud to work under him, men content with the rewards he gave them. The store family believed that the head of the business was sincere in stating that retail merchandising was a service. The ideal and personal affection were the bonds. Who served him he served; who were loyal to him, to them he was loyal. And on both sides it was a loyalty to the end, without limit and without reserve.

## CHAPTER XIX

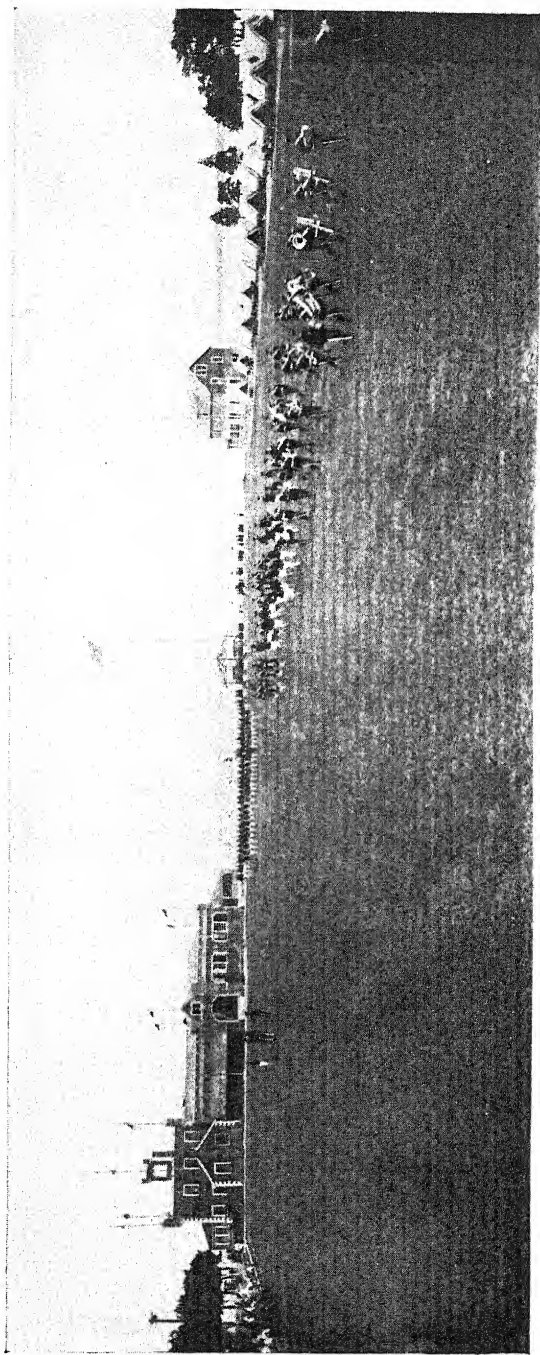
### ADVENTURES IN MERCANTILE EDUCATION

IN an address at the Academy of Music on June 30, 1887, Wanamaker said:

"America has been far behind other nations in business education. We are all in too much of a hurry to reach the top, and the want of training to hold positions taken is the constant cause of failure. I watched some fellows climbing a pole for prizes at the top; four out of five came short. The eager, breathless, hasty ones couldn't hold on, but the fellow who stood by and watched and then saw how he could twist himself around the pole, paying attention and thinking, kept on till he sprang down greeted by shouts to the victor. A friend said to me, 'I always endeavor not to lose hold of what I gain.'"

"Germany sends the best trained men into our American business life. It is astonishing what a big part of the importers and bankers in New York are German-born. Next comes England, where a lad enters a four years' apprenticeship and graduates with a certificate from a business house which carries him over the whole world. In America but little is known now of apprenticeships. The business colleges must be the mothers of our future business men. I wish we had schools for business that did not depend solely on private capital. I hope benevolent men will found universities of business."

Wanamaker was ahead of his generation. Nothing of the kind existed in the country. He had been in business for more than twenty-five years, and had come to realize



J. W. C. I. CAMP AT ISLAND HEIGHTS, N. J.



that large establishments like his had to depend upon themselves to give a mercantile education to their own people. When he was still in his twenties, he had begun to impress personally upon his salesmen the necessity for knowledge not only of their goods, but of how to dispose of them. This knowledge and this skill could be obtained only by constant study and thought. One of his first employees told us that when Oak Hall was a small store Wanamaker kept a book in his office for recording the day's sales. The men had to go back and write in it how many sales they had made and why they thought they had lost certain sales. Wanamaker studied the book every morning, and called the men in one by one to discuss salesmanship with them, taking as his text what each had written. He managed to find time to do this for years. Then the business grew too big, and there was the struggle to launch and develop the general store out of the Grand Depot. But back in 1880 prizes were offered for essays on salesmanship, which were printed in pamphlet form and circulated in the store. Wanamaker formed the habit of getting his people together in groups and teaching them the principles of salesmanship.<sup>1</sup>

Wanamaker did not weary in preaching to his store family what he called "the gospel of preparedness in business." He set the example himself. He frequently asserted that none in the store, including the founder, was too old to learn; and he encouraged and helped to make possible store organizations for the purpose of giving business and cultural courses to adults. These clubs and societies are too

<sup>1</sup> The *Library of Business Practice*, iv, p. 132, calls John Wanamaker the pioneer in teaching salesmanship. *The Dry Goods Economist*, March 25, 1911, said editorially: "The number of successful men and women who have been trained in the Wanamaker stores and have won high position in the dry-goods world is almost countless. Probably no better recommendation can be possessed by one who is seeking employment in this field than the fact that some years of his or her business life have been spent in one or both of the Wanamaker stores."

numerous to mention. We can only say that Wanamaker was always ready to advise their officers, to attend their meetings, and to take part in their discussions. How he felt after nearly fifty years in business is expressed in a stirring speech to the Wanamaker Business Club on October 4, 1909, when he declared:

"The rallying cry of the Wanamaker people must be: 'Back to the school!' The old folks from whose knowledge, and I may say experience, we have got so much of our success, will stand up around you—myself among them—to say that we are not too old to learn, and that young folks must have an opportunity to recover what they have lost by leaving school early to come into the ranks of the wage earners to help the mother, to help little children, to help to keep the home. God bless every one that has made sacrifices like that! It is one of the inspirations for the school that we have under our roof. Back to the school! And whoever is standing on the steps going up to ring the bells that shall open to his ambition a path to the higher levels of the world's work and enterprise must have in his mind the power to grasp the work and do it, to give himself, heart and soul, to the task of getting more education."

To the older people there were lectures and conferences and access to a well-stocked store library, as well as the classes organized by themselves in their clubs, which met at night in the stores. This was voluntary effort voluntarily guided. But for boys and girls, as soon as they became numerous in the store family, Wanamaker felt that it was his duty and privilege to provide regular instruction, which he made obligatory long before state laws stipulated continuation classes for employees from fourteen to sixteen years old. He was the pioneer in establishing courses of instruction in 1878, which developed into a store school in 1890, with a principal and staff of teachers. The John Wanamaker

Commercial Institute was organized, with optional senior as well as obligatory junior branches. The J. W. C. I. was put on military footing; students were called cadets, and regular drill work was introduced for boys and girls. John Wanamaker provided for them uniforms and military equipment, a commandant, and a bandmaster and instruments. In the New York store there were continuation classes, with a curriculum following that of the grammar school; and the J. W. C. I. was extended to New York.<sup>1</sup>

Of what the cadets were able to do in the Spanish-American War, because of their instruction, we have already spoken.<sup>2</sup> The story of the earlier years of the unique experiment was written by Wanamaker himself in 1908.<sup>3</sup> As he was in his element with young people and was enthusiastic about education and military training, the J. W. C. I. was one of the happiest adventures of his life—an inexhaustible source of pride and pleasure as long as he lived. He got great satisfaction out of the feeling that he was able to give his young people what they would otherwise have been deprived of having—instruction in arithmetic, spelling, penmanship, correspondence, English, bookkeeping, commercial geography and law, stenography, elocution, debating and drawing; and that he afforded them the opportunity of gymnastic and military training, band music, and belonging to an orchestra, mandolin club, and glee club.

There was nothing of the spirit of bestowing largesse in it. Wanamaker was no absentee benefactor, simply performing a duty. He went through the schoolrooms often,

<sup>1</sup> The course of study of the senior class was reproduced as a model of what store schools should offer in the Bulletin of the U. S. Department of Education, Washington, 1916, No. 34, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See above, vol. i, p. 374.

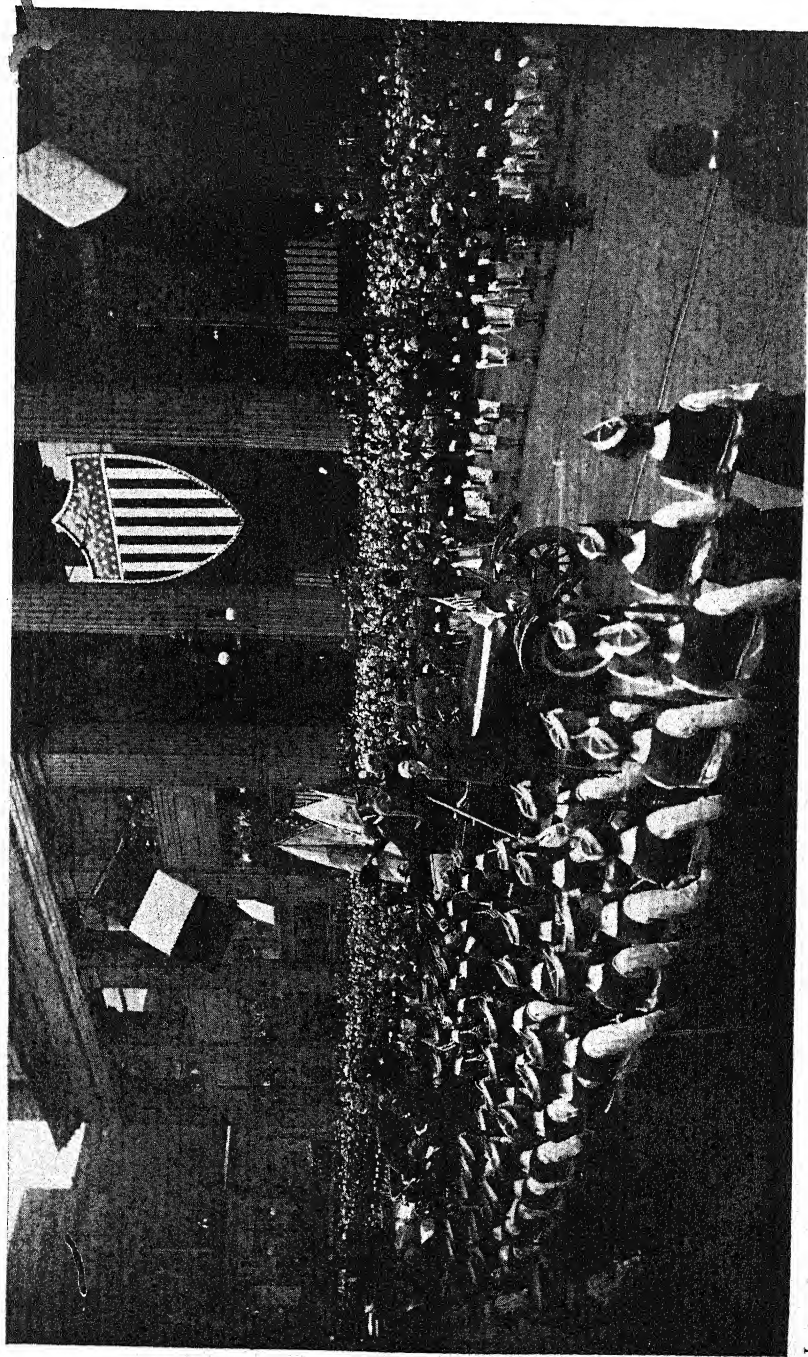
<sup>3</sup> See "The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute—A Store School," in *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1909, pp. 151-155. Later Wanamaker contributed to the *Dry Goods Economist*, April, 1912, an article on "Training Boys for Retail Career."

showing an interest in the work that escaped none and that spurred on the students to do their best. He attended drills and concerts, presented flags, and bestowed medals, getting fun out of it; and they all knew it. His diary is full of enthusiastic accounts of the "wonderful doings" of his cadets. On one occasion he got John Philip Sousa to direct the band and the bugle and drum corps. He was always present for reviews. He had the cadets turn out for parades at civic celebrations. He used to tell the girl cadets that he would "bet on them anywhere." In the midst of his exciting homeward voyage to attend the Republican National Convention in 1912, we find him writing to Colonel Scott a letter expressing keenly his regret at not being able to attend the summer review at the Metropolitan Opera House; and in the autumn of 1913 he recorded his pride at the "grand ball" given by the boy and girl cadets of the New York store in the Seventy-first Regiment Armory.

In 1916, when President Wilson called out the National Guard for service on the Mexican border, the two stores put into the field, wrote Wanamaker, "more than a full strength company, trained and ready for service, that the government and War Department did not know to be in existence." The next year, he ordered a bronze medal to be struck at the United States Mint and presented to the cadets on their return. From Florida he wired:

As far back as the year 1891 the J. W. C. I. incorporated into its educational work military training; and, without anticipating another war, kept up its study in drills without intermission for the past twenty-six years, greatly assisted at various times by the presence, suggestions, criticisms, and encouragement of prominent military men such as General Leonard Wood. As your commander-in-chief I send to every member in each city my congratulations and best wishes.

The cadets had a number of opportunities, both in New York and Philadelphia, to live days they will never forget



JOFFRE DAY AT WANAMAKER'S, PHILADELPHIA, MAY 9TH, 1917—THE BOYS' BATTALION AND GIRLS' BATTALION, J. W. C. I., PRESENTING FLAGS, AND ADDRESSES OF HONOR TO MARSHAL JOFFRE AND VICE-PREMIER VIVIANI



from 1917 to 1919. They took part in all the ceremonies and celebrations incidental to the World War, and formed a guard of honor to greet the visits of Marshal Joffre and other Allied generals and statesmen who visited the Wanamaker stores; and they were reviewed by the King and Queen of Belgium.

One of the great features of the J. W. C. I. was the two weeks encampment at Island Heights, required for boy cadets, and optional for girl cadets. They came in detachments from the two stores to the J. W. C. I. camp at the mouth of the Toms River, where, all summer long, the groups were drilled as in a National Guard camp, but with more time and facilities for baseball, field sports, swimming, and fishing. The senior cadets took their turn in the last fortnight of August, and John Wanamaker enjoyed going down for inspection day. His last visit, when he made a memorial address, was on August 19, 1919.

We cannot go into the details of this great work, with all its ramifications, but it will readily be seen how successfully Wanamaker created for his younger employees the fun and the educational advantages that he himself lacked in childhood. It was the fulfillment of a dream to give others, in so far as he could do so, compensation for what they missed in having to go to work early in life. The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute, with its fascinating cadet activities, stamped the younger employees with the personality and ideals of their great chief; broadened their intellectual horizon; gave them strength and heart for their work; and enabled them to have school experiences which would be a precious memory in later life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The traditional thrill of pride in Harvard or Smith is no more impelling than the loyalty of these pupils to the Wanamaker schools."—Caroline Slater in the *Independent*, February 7, 1916. "As the best universities of Europe and America set their 'hall mark' upon their sons, so this store stamps with the mark of distinction those of its employees who come under the influence of its traditions. To have made a place for oneself in Wana-

When Wanamaker returned from Florida on April 26, 1922, he said to the J. W. C. I. cadets who came to greet him what proved to be his last public message to them:

"It is very lovely of you to come. You don't need to bring me flowers when you come with your happy faces, and the things that you have spoken which are in your hearts. The best people that we have had in the store, in all its history, are the boys that have grown up in it. It is not rich men's sons that have gone to college, that have made the world's business men. They were poor boys that didn't have anything but a common-school education. Those are the boys that have been the great men in the nation; so just make up your minds to keep your eyes and ears open, and see and hear things. Think and keep working. The fellows that don't try to learn any more are soon spotted by the people around them. Thank you so much for the visit. Again I say, I like to see your faces."

When the new stores were built, large space was set aside for classrooms, auditoriums, and drill floors for the store families. As the Philadelphia store neared completion, Wanamaker had chartered, under the laws of Pennsylvania, the American University of Trade and Applied Commerce on December 10, 1908, "to perpetuate the schools of business instruction of the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute, and to enlarge their scope to enable the students while earning a livelihood to obtain by textbooks, lectures, and by the schools of daily opportunity such a practical and technical education in the arts and sciences of commerce and trade that they may be better equipped to fill honorable positions in life and thereby increase their personal earning power."

We might go on and give a description of the physical

maker's is to have won a diploma in the business world. For the loss we have sustained in Mr. Wanamaker's death nothing can make up to us. But in this store, which reflects his personality his spirit still lives on in us."—*J. W. C. I. Bulletin*, January 6, 1923.

equipment and of the courses. We might quote statistics. But it is all summed up in one sentence from a letter John Wanamaker sent, after the completion of the new Philadelphia building, to a friend who congratulated him. It shows that the adventurer in mercantile education recognized the essential foundation of his life's work:

It is one thing to build the ship, but it is much more important to train people to sail the ship.

## CHAPTER XX

### ADVENTURES IN INDUSTRIAL AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

WANAMAKER thought that the expression, "self-made man," commonly used to denote those who had achieved success without an education and family backing, was a misnomer. He never used it in speaking of himself. He contended that successful men were all self-made, whether they came from palace or from hut. To him the essential—and principal—factor in getting ahead in the world was what each man did for himself. At the same time he did not belittle the value of educational opportunities, and he said frequently that training of mind and hand and constant study not only helped a man to develop his talents and become efficient, but also to give him a rich, full life and make him happy in his work.

In a Pennsylvania campaign speech he said:

"There isn't a lazy bone in the body of the average American workingman. He asks no favors, but only an opportunity to use his steady hands, clear eyes, and strong arms. The best standing army that any country can have is not clothed in blue with brass buttons. It is the army in overalls, the gentlemen of the forge and factories, hands grimy with coal, smoke, and grease."

But many years later, in a store editorial, he wrote:

The making of America cannot be done with picks and shovels alone. The real America of the future depends upon what boys and girls become by academic and vocational training. The human mind is an empty furnace, unless the coals of learning are put in it and the fires

kept burning by persistent study. Natural smartness will not take the part of a well-trained and well-filled mind.

When he was in the prime of life he told a graduating class:

"You can never put a four-story man on a one-story boy. Education is making our own structure out of the imperishable principles of life. Actual living is completing the building which we have been sent into the world to construct. Not half a building, but a symmetrical, perfected whole, to fit into the place reserved for it in the temple of the Divine Architect of the universe. An error in the foundations will make your whole life a leaning tower, and, unlike Pisa, it will suddenly topple over."

Holding these ideas, it is not surprising that Wanamaker's life is filled with adventures in education. What he did for his store family has already been told. We have related also how he insisted upon his Sunday-school teachers preparing for their lesson; to make this possible he ran a religious weekly and financed the publication of lesson helps at a time when these were not available.<sup>1</sup> But his conception of his duty and opportunities in the field of education was not confined to store and Sunday-school efficiency.

Wanamaker was still a young man, and had not yet become a large employer of boys and girls in his business, when the idea came to him that something ought to be done by Bethany to give educational facilities to young people of the church and neighborhood. The group of buildings erected at Twenty-second and Bainbridge Streets was planned with the idea of offering instruction in trades as well as creating a center for social activities and physical training. In Bethany, one of the first of our institutional churches, was founded an industrial school where, at the very beginning, five hundred boys and girls enrolled for the

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 190-192.

study of bookkeeping, telegraphy, cooking, sewing, printing, and drafting. Wanamaker put his heart and soul into Bethany College, of which he became president of the Board of Trustees. At first it was a branch of the Sunday school, with two evenings a week of night school from October to May. Soon afterward Bethany College was opened "to all comers," as Wanamaker put it, "so that we may help more young people to better things." The courses were increased and given every night; and additional space outside was secured by moving to the building of the old Rush Hospital at Twenty-second and Pine Streets.

It was Wanamaker's idea that Bethany College, like the church and Sunday school, should be self-supporting, once the equipment was provided. He felt that its usefulness would be destroyed unless those who received its benefits made a sacrifice in order to secure their training. So nominal fees were charged. For many years the work was most discouraging, but Wanamaker and his associates persisted, despite irregularity in attendance and a lack of earnestness and enthusiasm. For a while it seemed a case of leading horses to water but not being able to make them drink. Nothing could have been more discouraging than this adventure in industrial education. More than one Bethany pastor recommended discontinuing it.

But a change in the attitude of "the masses" toward education occurred in the 1890's, the full influence and significance of which took twenty years or more to be understood. But Wanamaker saw it. In a small way it began to be felt in the Bethany neighborhood. It was a phenomenon observed almost at the beginning of the life of Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, and was soon to transform completely the People's Institute of Cooper Union, across Astor Place from the New York store. Wanamaker took over the Stewart business in 1896, just at the time when the

children of recent immigrants were flocking to night schools. The older American stock in large cities began to realize that it would become "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the second generation of the later stock from Europe unless an effort was made to rear a better-trained generation. John Wanamaker and his associates in Bethany welcomed the awakening. It gave them new faith in their industrial adventure. In 1900 one of them, Wanamaker's old friend and business associate, Rudolph S. Walton, died, leaving to Bethany College nearly \$200,000.<sup>1</sup> This gift, coming from one who knew the work intimately, was an encouragement and inspiration, and led to a change that Wanamaker had long had in mind to make.

During his annual visits to Europe he had been to the People's Palace and the Polytechnic in London and to a number of German institutions. At home he became acquainted with the extension work of the Armour Institute in Chicago and with the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. In the private files the biographer has discovered reports of these institutions, annotated by Wanamaker; and notes which indicate personal visits, followed by correspondence, between 1898 and 1905. Firm in the belief that the best setting for an organization giving industrial courses was a simple and wholly unpretentious one, such as they already had, none of the Walton money was put into a building. But it was thought that the school would fill a place in the life of Philadelphia better if dissociated from the church and moved to a more central location, and that day as well as night courses ought to be offered. In 1908 Bethany College was incorporated as the Wanamaker Institute of Industries. It was moved to buildings at Twenty-third and Walnut Streets, owned by Wanamaker, who donated their

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, pp. 33, 144-5.

use, free of expense, after having altered them to suit the needs of the school.

Before Wanamaker died the Institute had been again enlarged, overflowing into annexes. Hundreds of young people had been graduated; and over thirty courses were being given in school subjects and languages as well as in painting, music, art needlework, dressmaking, millinery, bookkeeping, stenography, engraving, garment cutting, mechanical drawing, and domestic sciences.

In the 1880's, when the Bethany experiment was launched, an old Philadelphia merchant and philanthropist told Wanamaker that the crying need of the day was to revive through trade schools the old apprentice system. Isaiah V. Williamson believed that "to have an America on a solid basis we must preserve and increase the artisan class." He never tired of asserting that Pennsylvanians ought to go back to the ideas of William Penn, who said that his colonists should have liberal learning, but also "useful knowledge" and "ingenuity mixed with industry." Williamson was alarmed at the "abandonment or disuse of the good old custom of apprenticeship in trades, and this has resulted in many young men growing up in idleness, which leads to vice and crime, and is fraught with great danger to society." The Bethany idea was a fine thing, but it needed, as Wanamaker had always contended, the creation of the desire to profit by facilities offered, and not a lot of money to give free courses which would not be appreciated. The Williamson idea, however, required a plant and an endowment to make possible the experiment.

On December 1, 1888, Williamson established a trust fund of nearly \$2,000,000, which he handed over to seven friends for the purpose of realizing his great idea. He chose men who were interested in the apprentice system and who had personal knowledge of how it still worked in

England and Germany. All of them, too, understood what he wanted done. By the terms of the trust the students were to be "bound as indentured apprentices to the trustees" for not less than three years; "to be fed, clad, and lodged; to receive an English education; to be taught trades; to have religious training, physical training, and training in frugal and economical habits." The only conditions were that the students should be chosen first from Philadelphia and surrounding counties; that not more than \$300,000 could be expended on buildings and land; and that the benefits of the school should "in all respects be gratuitous." The trustees were made self-perpetuating.

One of the seven prominent Philadelphians who accepted the Williamson trust was John Wanamaker. He outlived the others, as he did his fellow-members of the Centennial Board. His longevity and the faithful interest that never flagged to the day of his death made Wanamaker a unique influence in the foundation and development of the Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trades. In thirty-four years he rarely missed a meeting of the Board of Trustees, and for ten years preceding his death he was its chairman, and made a point of presiding at the graduation exercises in the latter part of April. During those years nearly fifteen hundred young men were given diplomas.

So ably did the trustees administer the fund that the school, opened on October 31, 1891, built on a fine tract of land in the suburbs of Philadelphia, was erected, including the cost of the land, entirely out of income. And after twenty-five years, in his Commencement address Wanamaker said that the school had two hundred acres and forty buildings, and yet the endowment was larger than when it was handed over by Williamson. This astounding result was due in part, of course, to the handling of the trust funds. But the principal reason lay in the character and

ideals of the founder, which the trustees had simply carried out, "to the best of our ability," as Wanamaker modestly put it. Williamson abhorred "the façade idea in education," by which he meant splurging in sumptuous buildings, and forgetting that "schools are what the teachers are." The young men at Williamson School were all carefully picked from hundreds of applicants between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. They had only four weeks vacation each year; and during their three years they did most of the work about the place—construction, repairing, and grading—as a part of their schooling. The forty buildings of which Wanamaker spoke were the result of practical education in bricklaying, carpentry, and mechanical drawing.

Wanamaker was always loyal to causes as well as to individuals. When he undertook to do anything it was because he believed in it; and he saw it through to the end. Williamson was the only friend of whom Wanamaker was the biographer.<sup>1</sup> He admired Williamson's sterling qualities and his vision. Helping to establish the Williamson School and to watch over it was a sacred trust. Wanamaker spoke on the life of Isaiah Williamson at the formal opening of the school in 1891; he presided and made the welcoming address at the first Commencement in 1894. At the third Commencement, 1897, he urged the students to be worthy of what Williamson had done for them, for "if the founder knew, he would never be satisfied to have a thousand dollars of his money spent upon a ten-cent boy." One of the most brilliant speeches of Wanamaker's career was made at the twenty-fifth anniversary in 1916. The diary is full of references to the Williamson School, and we find frequent expressions of pride in its growth and in the success of its alumni.

<sup>1</sup> The "Life of Isaiah V. Williamson" has never been published. See above, vol. ii, pp. 218-19, and also Bibliography.

To the graduating class of the Peirce School in Philadelphia in 1912 Wanamaker said:

"In these days an education is within the reach of everyone. A man's faculties can be shaped and drawn out, not all at once, but little by little, steadily, yet always doing something and surely advancing in the right direction to sift out the things of value from the things without value or actually detrimental to his well-being."

But Wanamaker had long come to accept the fact—a cardinal one of human nature—that most people seem to be born without initiative and never acquire it; consequently, what is within the reach of everyone, everyone does not get. An education is only a foundation, and adults have to build the edifice of their lives upon what they learned in childhood. How they build depends upon themselves, and yet—in a very real sense—upon the training and opportunities of childhood. Wanamaker recognized as a great tragedy the life of a man who developed initiative and attained great prominence, but who was never able to build as he wanted to, owing to defects in the foundation. Therefore he added to what he said to the Peirce School graduates:

"To be in the right mood and to have the right lessons from the right teacher to help us on to the main road is the chief thing."

In Wanamaker's private papers we came across a letter in which he set forth as one of the great purposes of his life "helping others to get an education." As we have seen, he was a pioneer in the educational field among his employees; and he had not been superintendent of Bethany long before he wanted his pupils to get at Bethany more than Bible instruction. He rejoiced in giving unstintingly of his time and devotion to realizing the dream of Williamson.

Many men with scant education who have risen to the top profess to make little of college education, and assume that

what they didn't have is not needed by others. Wanamaker was incapable of this display of bombast and ignorance. Not being consumed with self-esteem, he recognized his own deficiencies; and accustomed to think things out, he put high value on mental as well as other forms of training.<sup>1</sup> He was keenly interested in having his sons go through Princeton, and when his daughters were of school age, his interest in their education was characteristically thorough. There was no college preparatory school for girls in Philadelphia. Wanamaker founded one. Wellesley College took an interest in it, and furnished the teachers. Wanamaker got the Rev. Dr. J. R. Miller to become its principal. He took the house, 2027 Chestnut Street, and the school opened on September 27, 1882, with boarding and day pupils. The Wellesley School, as it was called, attracted much attention throughout the country; it brought John Wanamaker into contact with President Freeman of Wellesley, and did much to inspire him and others in Philadelphia to consider the claims of women to higher education. At the fifth anniversary, in 1887, Professor Robert Ellis Thompson, addressing the graduating class, expressed the hope that before long women would be admitted to the University of Pennsylvania. Wanamaker, who was presiding, rose to his feet and led the applause that greeted this heresy. Until he went to Washington Wanamaker stopped at the Wellesley School every Monday morning on the way to business and gave a talk to the girls.

Military education appealed to Wanamaker, not only for

<sup>1</sup> Answering the query of a New England educator, he wrote on November 15, 1912: "Regarding the value of an education, permit me to say that, all things else being equal, I believe that the man with an education is better able to grasp quickly and solve the problems that confront him in whatever calling or profession he may engage. A mechanic, to do his best part, must have tools of good quality that are in perfect condition. Education does for a man's brains what the mechanic keeps doing when he sees that the tools with which he works are of good temper and properly sharpened."

its discipline, but also because it prepared young men for National Guard duty in their communities and also to take places of responsibility in case of war. He put the training of the younger employees in his stores on a military footing at a time when the United States had enjoyed nearly thirty years of uninterrupted peace and there were no war clouds on the horizon. This interest led him to accept election to the Board of Trustees of the Pennsylvania Military College at Chester in 1892. The next year he became vice-president, and in 1899 president, of the Board. After his death Colonel Hyatt wrote to Rodman Wanamaker: "We loved your father for himself and not because he had obligated us by contributing endowments or erecting buildings." John Wanamaker was a faithful friend of this institution for thirty years. How seriously he took his duties is shown by the diaries and by the private files, where we found speeches conferring degrees, drafted in his own handwriting. He enjoyed nothing more than the annual Commencements of the Pennsylvania Military College, at which he presided, as he did at the Williamson School, except when he happened to be abroad. In the office of president he was faithful to the end of his life. Pressure of business, other social invitations, and even considerations of health were not allowed to interfere with the June day set aside for Chester. In 1921 he conferred the degree of Doctor of Military Science upon General Pershing, and in 1922 on Secretary Weeks and Senator Pepper.<sup>1</sup> On July 6, 1922, in answer to a letter from General Hyatt, who wrote of his "masterful power in the Armory Exercises, that continues in you to-day, as ever a rare leader in thought and action," he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> The 1921 Commencement was the fifty-ninth of the college, but the one hundredth of the founding of the institution. On the margin of the program in the files is written in Wanamaker's hand: "Ordered to begin with military precision: is late."

The occasion of our last Commencement Day at the Pennsylvania Military College was one of the best ever, but I felt very far from being equal to the duties that fell upon me, eager as I was to make the best of the opportunity. I confess that I felt the importance of making the proper impression upon the cadets, but I had no idea, nor have I now, of being worthy of the splendid letter that you have written to me. I shall send a copy of it to my son in Paris, and I shall file the original away for inspiration, if I live to another Commencement Day, to try to do better for the great institution of which you are the worthy and honored chief.

Wanamaker's interest in the public schools of Philadelphia began when he was a child at the Landreth School. He was unable to finish even the grammar grades. But no Philadelphian ever espoused more warmly and more continuously the program of school extension, as the city grew, than he. Almost the first letter on a subject outside Oak Hall and Bethany that we found in the early files was his urgent plea in 1870 for a campaign on behalf of the public schools of Philadelphia, so that "when the Centennial visitors come here they may not go home saying that Philadelphia is backward in affording schooling opportunities to every child in this growing city." During the period of his active participation in municipal and state politics the needs of the public schools and the mismanagement of school funds were mentioned in almost every speech. Because of his many trips abroad and the imperative necessity of dividing his time between Philadelphia and New York, Wanamaker had been unable to yield to the strong inclination to accept membership on the Board of Education. But he did accept invitations to address school children when he could, and he took an active part in the movement for adequate buildings in different sections of the city. Of the public schools we find many mentions in his diary. The following is an illustration:

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I am waiting at the James Madison School at New Market and Green Streets to redeem a promise to speak to 1,200 scholars. The classes are assembling and I may be called any minute. This looks as if I am not very busy. But I am. My first speech to-day was in the Buyers meeting at 9:30 in the Byzantine Hall. Since that I have been on a steady go, to such an extent that my morning mail must go with me to-night to N. Y. for attention there. . . . Members of the Board of Education did me the compliment of coming to the school talk. . . . It is now 7 p.m. I have taken the sales and R. W. waits to go home with me.

After 1912 Wanamaker did not go abroad again, and he left the New York store very largely to his son Rodman. Consequently, when the Board of Judges again asked him if he would serve on the Board of Education, he consented, and was appointed on March 11, 1913. He was assigned to membership on the committees on elementary schools, normal and high schools for girls, and on qualifications of teachers. At the beginning of 1914 he was put on the committee on property, and on April 11, 1916, became a member of the committee on finance. Of this committee, which directed the policies of the Board, he was made chairman on January 7, 1918, and served until his death.

What John Wanamaker did for Philadelphia as a member of the Board of Education was called by an eminent Philadelphian "the most important and useful service he rendered to the city he loved." It was a service that he regarded as a patriotic duty, and to it he gave unstintedly of his time and talents. Despite the difficulties he encountered, which were not slight, the veteran merchant found in his work for the public schools a joy and satisfaction that was second only to what came to him in his Bethany work. He was in his element talking to children and fighting their battle; he respected the profession of public-school teacher and thought that it should be adequately paid; and he consistently took the position that what the schools needed to promote the welfare of the children of

Philadelphia came ahead of any other claims on the city treasury.

A year after Wanamaker became a member of the Board, President William T. Tilden of the Union League said:

"Mr. Wanamaker is serving under me on the Property Committee of the Board of Education. I have lived a lifetime for that! But even now, when he is serving under me, he bosses the job, and when he stands up to say anything, the chairman might as well sit down."

Tilden was an old friend and admirer of Wanamaker's, and understood him thoroughly. He knew the full scope of Wanamaker's business ability, his vision, and his great heart; but there were others to whom the vehemence and positiveness of Wanamaker's opinions came as a shock. It is possible that they felt that "the old man" was going to be only a perfunctory member; for he had so many irons in the fire. They did not know Wanamaker's own saying, to wit, "Put no iron in the fire that you can't watch being heated and then use afterward." When Wanamaker took a job, he did all the work connected with it—and more!

Wanamaker fought for proper ventilation and lighting of school buildings; and he went on a rampage over the unsanitary conditions that existed in some of the schools. He advocated special classes for backward children; social welfare work in the home; an increase in appropriations for medical and dental work among primary grades; and a special fund for psychological tests. He carried on a vigorous campaign for raising teachers' salaries.<sup>1</sup> He declared

<sup>1</sup> A fellow-member of the Board wrote to the biographer: "Wanamaker incurred the displeasure of some of his colleagues on the Board by a statement published in the newspapers to the effect that he had no patience with the claim that the Board had not means with which to pay reasonable salaries, saying further that the Board should mortgage its real estate, if necessary, in order to provide the money." The private files show that in 1919 and 1920 Wanamaker received hundreds of letters and resolutions from organizations, clergymen of all persuasions, and especially social workers and teachers, thanking him for his successful effort to secure a bonus and salary increase

that all the reports and recommendations of the superintendent and school principals, which were to come up for discussion, ought to be mailed to the members of the committees several days before the meetings, so that they might be studied beforehand. He insisted that when complaints were made about the physical condition of school buildings or insufficient equipment in seating space, the question ought not to be discussed and settled at a meeting until after the committee members had made a personal investigation on the spot to find out what was complained of or what was wanted. When he failed to get satisfaction in the Board, generally because of the failure of Councils to appropriate sums recommended, he did not hesitate to carry the cause of the school children into the newspapers in the effort to mobilize public opinion in favor of better schools.

Just to give one instance of his attention to detail, when he was chairman of the property committee in 1916, and the plans for enlarging the Northeast Manual Training School were before them, he called a meeting at eight A.M. at the school, in the northeastern section of the city. After looking at the plans, Wanamaker declared that they ought to think thirty years ahead.<sup>1</sup> He said that the corridors were too narrow, and declared that it made for safety and ventilation and for the comfort of pupils in recess to have wide corridors. He encouraged Dr. Morrison, the princi-

pal for public-school teachers. The letters reveal a serious situation in the Philadelphia schools, and they indicate the great amount of time Wanamaker gave to painstaking investigation before he came out, virtually single-handed, to fight for this measure.

<sup>1</sup> This school has now become the Northeast High School, and has grown in thirty-five years to 2,486 students and 106 teachers—all that the enlarged building can possibly accommodate. After the enlargement was finished, the enrollment was immediately over 2,000. The original plan to increase the facilities, against which Dr. Morrison had protested, called for accommodation of only 1,800. Had not Mr. Wanamaker intervened energetically, the Northeast High School would have been insufficient to receive the applicants on the very day of its opening!

pal, to state exactly what he wanted, and promised to try to get it for him. He declared that the city was "not going to skimp money," and that this new building was so important that he would recommend increasing the tax rate in order to make it "the right thing from every viewpoint." Later, in advocating the appropriation and in insisting upon a very large gymnasium, he said:

"During this next generation the most vital interest of this city and the nation is adequate public schools. Let us pay what is necessary to have adequate buildings, with every convenience and safety device, with light and ventilation, with space for future expansion. If we do not give the children of to-day the very best educational facilities the nation of to-morrow will reproach our memory."

In 1918, in the midst of the World War, Wanamaker created a sensation by abruptly leaving the room when the finance committee was in session, after declaring that he could not "go on with it while it continued to do things higgledy-piggledy." The criticism was directed not so much at the committee as at the methods employed at City Hall, where, even in the midst of the war, politicians were thinking of themselves and not of the real interest of the nation. Public opinion was with Wanamaker. He did not resign, but continued to serve until he died. Few quarreled with the objects he had in mind; and most Philadelphians were willing to make the financial sacrifices to attain them, believing, as Wanamaker expressed it, that "the solidarity of our nation, its faithfulness to the ideals of our fathers, and its devotion to the flag, depend upon our public schools."

## CHAPTER XXI

### A MILITANT TOTAL ABSTAINER

WANAMAKER'S abhorrence of strong drink came to him by precept and example in his own home and by the experiences of childhood. The rowdyism of the Schuylkill Rangers, the disturbances in the brickyards, the degradation of neighbors, caused him to grow up associating crime and failure in life with the use of alcohol. To him, drinking was the root of most of the troubles of society. Tobacco he disliked; alcohol he hated.

At Tower Hall, when he was not yet sixteen, John carried a little book that he would take out on all occasions to induce people to sign their names to the pledge it contained. He had several of these books, in one of which there was a pledge for abstinence from tobacco as well. The opposition of the liquor interests during the first years of his Bethany work made him emphasize total abstinence as a cardinal doctrine of his Sunday-school teaching. He wanted everybody to take a pledge, man, woman, and child.

It was the same in his business. At first his staff had to be total abstainers or they could not keep a job with him. Later he did not presume to dictate the personal habits of his store family when they were off duty. But whenever anyone was brought before him for inefficiency, lack of discipline, or theft, and whenever he made an investigation of financial, marital, or health conditions because of an employee's appeal for aid, drink was the first question he brought up. He wanted to know if drink had anything to do with the difficulty. If it had, he recommended a

pledge; and there was always a pledge, ready to sign, in his desk drawer.

John Wanamaker seemed able to preach total abstinence without getting himself disliked for it. The boy at Tower Hall was popular with everyone, and yet we know he pestered them to put their names under the pledge in his black book. He proved a drawing card and became the center of a group of young men all of whom professed to be fond of him when he was Y. M. C. A. secretary. These young fellows of his own age and older were not sycophants, because John was poor and unknown at the time. He was a feverish temperance propagandist in the Y. M. C. A. By his personality he gathered a group of devoted helpers around him at Bethany when conditions in Sunday-school work there were far from agreeable and the time was still years ahead when the Bethany superintendent could give financial help or a job in his store. At Bethany, too, he harped on total abstinence.

As a boy and young man he must have been sincere and disingenuous in his espousal of the temperance cause. He must have disarmed with his enthusiasm those who might have taken offense. If it had been merely the reformer's zeal he might have earned the reputation of being a prig when he was young and a busybody later. But somehow we fail to find record of anyone who took exception to being tackled by John Wanamaker on the liquor question. Is not this because those whom he approached felt that it was a matter of religious conviction with the boy and that he believed that signing the pledge was the way to serve God? Was it not also because there was nothing condemnatory in his attitude? He never denounced victims of alcohol.

Probably the greatest work he ever did—certainly the most unostentatious—was that in connection with drunkards. He would argue with them, pray with them, plead with

them, but never scold them. He did not lose faith in men who drank too much, but applied himself strenuously to reclaiming them. The Friendly Inn and what it represented is one of the beautiful chapters of John Wanamaker's life. When he was very young he had seen men go way down to the depths and come back. He knew nothing in the early days of brainstorms, maniac-depressive insanity, Freudian theories, and physiological explanations of the liquor habit and crime. He had only one remedy for the man who was down and out, and never once through his long life did he doubt the efficacy of this remedy. It was what he called "the miracle of grace," and the pledge was simply an aid. His mother told him when he was a small boy that Christ redeemed man from sin. The most tangible sins he ever came in contact with were, to his mind, the evils born of strong drink. "Christ can cure," he said. And he used the formula. It never occurred to him that failures were due to any other cause than lack of faith.

Once in the early days of Bethany, the superintendent gave a talk on temperance that people kept asking him to repeat for fifty years. He said:

"If I was asked to give a young man a book for business, I would recommend the words of Solomon, whose wealth exceeded that of all our millionaires. Proverbs is full of push and pull, of warning and encouragement. You can eat what you please and drink what you please. You can go, and God puts no yoke on you. Eve ate herself out of Eden, and Esau ate up his birthright. Many men, head-strong and self-willed, drink out their lives with the fruit of the still. Wine is a mocker. It laughs at you. Even if I was an infidel, and not a Christian, I would say to you not to drink. But the advice wouldn't do much good. For I couldn't tell you how to resist drink. You can do that through Christ and only through Christ."

Francis Murphy and John B. Gough were two of his heroes. He felt that they were fighters in a cause as sacred and far more difficult to triumph in than the Civil War. What he wrote about Gough, after hearing him at the great temperance meeting of 1860, is as striking and as full of emotion as what he wrote about Lincoln a year later. In 1867 Wanamaker brought Gough to Philadelphia to speak at a meeting in Horticultural Hall, and he was the first "great man" entertained at the Wanamaker home. Over a quarter of a century later, speaking at his funeral, he prophesied that the work of John B. Gough would one day be written into the hearts of men and into the laws of all lands.

As an encouragement to others he used to sign the pledge along with those whom he had persuaded. Through these pledges, which he carefully saved from 1855 to 1921, we are able to establish John Wanamaker's autograph at all periods of life, and to prove that the octogenarian had not abandoned his boyhood habit of campaigning for total abstinence and praying with men whom he wanted to save from strong drink.

He gave a great deal of thought to the form of the pledge. He started writing pledges long before he began to write advertisements. The same ability to present things attractively and to appeal to the imagination was revealed in both. The compositors at the Times Printing House used to say that the variety of form and dress given to the Wanamaker pledges followed the same general lines as the ways of expressing the Wanamaker business principles. He was all the time thinking up new names for pledges—names that responded to clauses inserted in the text. The Bethany Bible Union pledge, for instance, was called the "Life Line," and contained a clause binding the signer to militant temperance work, likening him to a life-saver. When these pledges were passed around he would announce

the hymn, "Throw Out the Life Line." The pledge, he declared, was not for weak men alone, but for strong men, for men who never drank, for all Christians. The pledge was something positive, not negative. Not only did it aid in enlisting workers for war on the liquor traffic, but it was also a subtle appeal to the pride and self-respect of the man who needed to sign a pledge for his own sake.

Of the pledges of later years the most striking was a lithograph, which featured the American flag and the Liberty Bell under the caption, "A New Declaration of Independence." "For the good of my country and of my family," it read, "I hereby separate myself from the drinking habit and the friendship of those who tempt me to use intoxicants. I now declare myself for total abstinence, and agree to abstain from the use of malt and spirituous liquors as a beverage. Given under my hand and seal this day and date," etc. The witness was John Wanamaker. Signing the pledge in this form was in the nature of a ceremonial. Hundreds of men, most of them recalcitrant employees, went out of his private office after having put their names to this document with a John Hancockian feeling of having thrown off the yoke.

At the Lincoln dinner in 1914 were distributed copies of a temperance pledge which John Wanamaker believed to have been "personally written by Abraham Lincoln," and his guests were made to feel that in signing it they were showing their affection and loyalty to Lincoln. This was the year of the local-option campaign, sponsored by Governor Brumbaugh, which John Wanamaker prepared and largely underwrote. His idea in calling attention to the Lincoln pledge was to point out that "the pledge with teeth in it" bound the signer to enter heart and soul into every movement tending to destroy the saloon. Most of the Wanamaker pledges are ironclad, containing a clause

in which the promise is made "not to go with any company that will tempt me to drink or lose my manhood; and not to go into a saloon." Virtually all the pledges state that refraining from drink and fighting the liquor traffic are Christian duties.

He had little faith in the efficacy of the Prohibition Party. To make the abolition of the liquor traffic a major political issue when the bulk of the American electorate did not so regard it seemed to him futile. It was putting the cart before the horse. He felt that it was the work of the churches to arouse sentiment against the use of alcohol, and that when enough church members became total abstainers and enlisted themselves under the banner of temperance, prohibition would come about automatically. To this end he advocated and supported liberally the educational temperance work of the Presbyterian Church. At Bethany he organized the White Ribbon Army, on December 7, 1884. Its declaration of purpose was:

With charity for all and malice toward none, to make an aggressive campaign against strong drink and to save men, women, and children from the curse of rum, uniting ourselves under God as our captain, we will show our colors as a witness for the right, diligently work against the traffic in liquor, and strive, by all proper means, to lift men to a nobler life.

At first this organization was on a military basis, with officers, and an effort was made to spread it, in this form, to Sunday schools and churches throughout the country. The movement did not succeed, through lack of an organization to push it. But the idea of the white ribbon as the badge of hostility to liquor traffic was adopted by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the term "white ribboner" passed into common usage in the English language.

In the local-option movement, and not in the Prohibition

Party, he saw the practicable means of legislating against the liquor traffic. It was always his contention—and he emphasized this during his brief active political career—that law enforcement was dependent upon public opinion, and that the corrective of the ills from which society was suffering was education. The people had to be taught the evil of the use of alcohol. It was far more important to get at the children in the Sunday schools, in Wanamaker's opinion, and to awaken the conscience of older people, than to reform morals through legislation. He was by no means always consistent in this attitude; for he supported the old Sunday blue laws. But he was lukewarm toward political agitation for total abstinence legislation until the Anti-Saloon League began to make itself felt. He rejoiced in the success of the League's militant work. He supported the Kenyon-Sheppard bill in 1911, to aid prohibition states by making interstate commerce in intoxicating liquors illegal where this commerce was clearly an evasion of the law of certain states.

After the United States entered the World War, John Wanamaker was one of the first to bring pressure to bear upon Woodrow Wilson to enact by decree war-time prohibition. We have in his own handwriting the text of the telegram that he asked Bethany Sunday School to authorize him to send to the President.

The Bethany Sunday School of Philadelphia, including the Bethany Temple and Memorial, six thousand strong, teachers and scholars, at the close of the temperance lesson to-day, May 20, 1917, earnestly urge the President of the United States to cause an Act of Congress to be passed to prohibit the making, selling, and using of malt and spirituous liquors during the war.

The passage of the Prohibition Amendment was a surprise to him. He never expected that it would come in his day. But he believed that the time was ripe for it, and

he said that it indicated a great change wrought in public opinion by the quiet persistent educational work of which he had been an advocate all his life. He asserted that the Amendment was the result of seed sown in the Sunday schools. For the celebration of Amendment Day, January 18, 1920, he prepared a card as President of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association, in which he said:

For thirty years the Sunday schools of the land have taught a quarterly Temperance Lesson, thereby helping to develop a leadership that has finally dethroned King Alcohol.

During the last two years of his life John Wanamaker followed with keen anxiety the progress of the enforcement of the Amendment. He did not feel discouraged over bootlegging and violation of the law. But he grew very indignant when people said that the Amendment was the work of fanatics, and that there was more drinking than before the law went into effect. He was delighted with an article by Dr. Woods Hutchinson, in the July, 1922, issue of *Hearst's International Magazine*. Dr. Hutchinson put up a strong case for the efficacy of the law, and predicted the gradual disappearance of the illicit traffic in open form. Wanamaker sent marked copies of this magazine to people whom he had heard stating glibly that "prohibition does not prohibit."

His views of the Constitutional Amendment after two years are set forth in a letter written on May 9, 1922, to the secretary of the Law Enforcement League of Philadelphia:

On my return from the South, where I was compelled to go by my doctors' orders to get rid of winter colds, an expression of opinion has been requested from me in regard to the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment.

There can be no real difference of opinion regarding the necessity for the enforcement of this law, as well as any law that has been placed

upon the statute books of the nation. To enforce one and not another is to breed disrespect for all law and weakens the whole fabric of our government.

The Prohibition Amendment was adopted in the manner prescribed by our Constitution. It was not a hurried proceeding, or taken upon snap judgment, but was long foreshadowed by the Prohibition legislation enacted by the various states.

It was peculiarly fitting that Prohibition should have come previous to the Amendment giving suffrage to the women, who are now real partners in the political life of the nation. What a humiliation it would have been to have invited our mothers, wives, and daughters to cast their votes in saloons, as was so often the case, and in an atmosphere of liquor and drunkenness.

Personally, I believe in Prohibition, because in a long experience I have seen the evil and degrading effects of the liquor traffic and do not believe that it can be safely played with any more than can dope or dynamite.

I think that the American people will never want to go back to the old régime, but if there are those who think otherwise, the same orderly procedure is open to them that took place in enacting the Prohibition Amendment.

I write this in no spirit of censoriousness. It is what I conscientiously feel and believe to be for the greatest good and happiness of our common heritage.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE FRIENDLY INN

FROM the moment he first heard of General Booth's work in London, Wanamaker was interested in the Salvation Army. To adapt the Gospel message to the new conditions caused by the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century was a problem that commanded the time and thought of Wanamaker as much as similar problems in mercantile life. Old business methods did not meet changed conditions of city life; the concentration of population in large centers demanded new agencies and new ways of doing things in business. It was the same with the church. Wanamaker's part in the early days of the Young Men's Christian Association we have recorded. He once said that George Williams and William Booth had founded widely different organizations, working in widely different fields, but that they were equally essential auxiliaries of the church. In great cities, when church connections were broken for Protestants, there was neither the doctrinal hold nor the machinery such as the Catholic Church enjoyed for their churches to continue to be an influence in their lives.

But Wanamaker believed that all agencies for Christian work failed in motive force and in constructive results unless individual Christians had "a keen and ever-present urge to communicate to others their own religious experience and thus bear testimony to the power of the Gospel," as he put it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker lived up to this belief at all times and in all places in his contact with all sorts of people. Numerous instances have come to the biographer to support this assertion. Wanamaker was as willing and ready

We have been told by men who were intimately associated with the Wanamaker business through long years that the shrewdness and good sense of its founder sometimes deserted him when he was dealing with "no-account employees." "He never learned that derelicts were a hopeless job to reform," declared one of these, "and once he took up a man, he would hold on to him to grim death—even spend his time praying with the fellow in his office!"

But Wanamaker did not accept the word "derelict." He believed, with Whittier, that no man could "drift beyond God's love and care." The convictions and habits of Christian work formed in his youth were never given up. He did not go beyond or feel the need to discard the simple formula that "Christ can save." He refused to subordinate it to new theories of human behavior or to experimental principles of applied sociology. He accepted as facts, of course, inherited tendencies to drink and crime; handicaps and adverse conditions created by poverty, lack of parental guidance, and misfortunes; and the destruction of moral and social inhibitions through mental disorders. But that those who were down and out could be restored to society by "the power of the Cross" more surely than by man-made formulæ or treatment he never doubted. That it was every Christian's duty to do his part in applying the sole effective means of "casting out devils" was a conviction always with him. One's personal witness to Christ, he affirmed, must be made at all times and to all men. Hence the natural recourse to prayer and religious exhortation in his private office when he was dealing with the mistakes, the weaknesses, the yielding to temptation,

to speak to men in the highest position concerning Christ, and to offer to reason and pray with them, as he was with his employees and those who came to Bethany and with the men who sought the hospitality of the Friendly Inn. He used to say that everybody needed salvation and that he was not "ashamed of Jesus."

of employees. Hence the persistence of his faith in men despite the proof that it had been misplaced. Hence the Friendly Inn.

A man whom he had known slightly some years before in Y. M. C. A. work came to Wanamaker in the latter part of 1893. Wanamaker assumed that he wanted a job, and offered him one in the store. But Thomas T. Horney answered, "No, I have a work to do for men, and I must do it." He explained that long experience in city missions had brought him to the opinion that "down-and-outs" did not need charity. Most agencies, like policemen, were engaged in the easy task of just keeping them moving. Horney believed that if he had a place where derelicts would come for lodgings, so that he could get hold of them, they could be put on their feet by direct personal work. He would make them earn their way, not as a punishment, but as a step toward rehabilitation. He would restore their self-respect and follow them with encouragement until they were fully on their feet.

"What will you say to them to effect this transformation?" asked Wanamaker.

"That Christ can cleanse and Christ can heal," was the prompt response.

No more was needed. Wanamaker told Horney that he had made up his mind long ago to do work of this kind, and that he would spend \$100,000 if Horney could do what he said he could. Horney went out from the interview with the promise of full support.

Horney was unfamiliar with Philadelphia, and it took him some time to study the situation and pick out his place. He finally settled on an old building, formerly the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania, which had been for years a second-rate hotel. He did not want it fixed up and furnished too well, and spent much less than

Wanamaker was willing to invest in the work. Horney kept insisting that if the venture were to be successful it must be largely self-supporting, and he told Wanamaker that in his own case, after he had got the work well started, he would be glad to have a job in the store, and carry on the Friendly Inn as his "volunteer work for the Lord."

The Friendly Inn was dedicated by John Wanamaker on October 21, 1895. He had never set foot in it before that evening, although his investment amounted to over \$75,000. All had been left to Horney. In his opening address Wanamaker said that the Friendly Inn was to be a self-supporting hotel for self-respecting men, and that if it was very simply run it was because the guests did not care to pay for luxuries. Many men are blessed with quick sympathy with others and an intuitive perception of how others feel; but the felicitous expression of this understanding is the gift of few. Wanamaker got along with people, no matter how awkward or unusual the circumstances, because they felt his kindness, and he knew how to put them at their ease without delay.<sup>1</sup> Two years of close study of the life and writings of Wanamaker have led the biographer to think that possibly the epitaph that best fits him would be, "He sat in judgment on no man."

It was this spirit that prompted the founding of the Friendly Inn; it was the keynote of the opening night and all the days that followed during the twenty-seven years of Wanamaker's devotion to his fellow-men through the

<sup>1</sup> One of the executives in the Philadelphia store remembers that when he was a cash boy he mustered up courage to go into Wanamaker's office to show him a new and cheap way to wrap small packages that he thought he had discovered. "He was sitting at his flat-top desk, and I quickly passed to him a sample package I had wrapped. As I did so my sleeve caught on the inkwell and upset it." The horrified boy stood rooted to the spot. Wanamaker said: "Now I am going to show you something. If you attack a pool of ink with the edge of a blotter, instead of stamping the blotter flat down on it, it is astonishing how quickly it disappears." The devotion of a lifetime of able service was thus won in a minute.

Friendly Inn. He did not judge. He did not condemn. He did not criticize, scold, chide. He simply told men that if they willed they could be made whole, that no man had any health in him, and that all men could, like Paul, do all things through Christ who strengthened them.

When its founder died in 1922, the register of the Friendly Inn recorded a million and a quarter lodgings, a million and a half meals, and nearly a million baths. Those were the figures, eloquent in themselves, but they did not tell the story. That only two men knew. Through all those years Horney remained in charge. At first he devoted himself night and day to launching the work and getting it going; after several years he gave his spare time to the Friendly Inn and Bethany, and has now for many years been employed in the Wanamaker store.

Although the Friendly Inn was included, at its founder's request, among the Bethany activities in 1897 and was an object of interest and devotion to Bethany people, it remained peculiarly the personal work of two men. It was never out of Wanamaker's mind and heart. A friend once offered to make an initial contribution of \$100,000 to enlarge the Friendly Inn and then to share in whatever expenses of maintenance there might be. Wanamaker refused. He said that there was room for another work of the kind—for many more—in Philadelphia and other cities. But if his Friendly Inn became big and institutional, he felt that it would be spoiled, that the more sensitive types of men who needed its ministrations would not come or would be repelled after they did come. The object of having the bedrooms and restaurant was to enable Horney to get into contact with men who needed the message he could give. And with the work as it was, Wanamaker himself could meet and talk with the men that Horney wanted to bring to him.

In speaking of the Friendly Inn, John Wanamaker said that it was God's work, and not man's, to make saints out of wrecks overnight. All the Inn could do was to lay its finger on the diseased spot in the man and to deal with cause, first, last, and all the time. No man was cheered and comforted by being allowed to think that he could dodge responsibility for his acts. But the effort was made to discriminate carefully in classifying them. A crook was dealt with as a crook; he was told that he was not deceiving Wanamaker and Horney; frankness resulted in the disappearance of the man or the winning of his full confidence. The Friendly Inn was kept at 150 beds because it was Wanamaker's belief that men could not "be intelligently helped in crowds and that is where most well-intended efforts have fallen down."

The testimony of men who had grasped the helping hand held out to them would make a beautiful chapter in the life of John Wanamaker. The letters are a revelation. Wanamaker's prompt and inspiring answers are a revelation. Is it possible for simply friendliness, a Bible message, and a prayer, to take a man, penniless, unkempt, and despairing, off the streets and send him home to become a prominent member of his community, even governor of his state or a judge on the bench? Is it possible to win a man who has had a brainstorm from a life of sin and degradation and send him back to his wife and children? Wanamaker could give a positive affirmative answer to these questions. But what the men of the Friendly Inn wrote to him and what he wrote to them is too sacred for the printed page.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

THE crusading spirit of Wanamaker singled out Sabbath-breaking and drinking as the outstanding evils of society. He had been taught by his mother to believe that it was a sin to fail to observe the Sabbath in the good old Puritan fashion and that it was a sin to drink. His father and grandfather were Sabbatarians and total abstainers. They had for friends only people of like standards of conduct. The neighborhood in which the Wanamaker children grew up contained some families that were, in the eyes of the Wanamakers, "godless." It was constantly pointed out to John how those that failed to keep the Sabbath got into trouble and how filth, hopeless poverty, and misery were the lot of those who drank.

When he grew up he came to know people of character and position who did not share his ideas of how Sunday should be spent and who used alcohol. When European travel became a part of his life he realized that a radically different attitude toward Sunday did not imply irreligion and that the use of alcoholic beverages did not necessarily entail economic and social distress. This knowledge made him more tolerant of others; but it did not modify his own practices and teaching. He kept on to the end of his life insisting upon strict observance of the Sabbath as a means of grace in the Christian life, and he never gave up actively waging war against liquor.

He was an example of how a man can stick by the convictions of his youth without modification, despite sweeping

changes in the circumstances and conditions of his life. When John was a boy it never occurred to him to spend his Sundays in any other way than the way his family spent them. As he grew up he did not regard Sunday-school work and church duties as a burden. They kept his Sundays pleasantly occupied until he died. He married a girl whose upbringing and tastes were similar to his own. When he acquired wealth and prominence and became a man of international activity and influence, wherever he went he was constantly being sought after to do all sorts of attractive things on Sunday. But he remained what he had been as a boy. Sunday was a day set apart.

Many high-minded men feel that they ought not to refuse to fall in with the manner of life and thinking of the people around them when they have gone from one social environment to another or are living temporarily away from the home atmosphere. They believe in the principle of doing in Rome what the Romans do. They find themselves able to change their habits to suit circumstances. Wanamaker became very much a man of the world in matters where deep rooted principles were not at stake. But he was always a teetotaler and a Sabbatarian. The occasion never arose when he had to take a drink or to work on Sunday. Early in life, when business exigencies seemed to demand an exception to his Sabbath rule, he said:

"You might as well try to get a living thing out of the Dead Sea as to attempt to find the man who is forced to work on Sunday. Men are too easily influenced by the demands made upon them. Worldly toil has a tendency to occupy our minds to the exclusion of the affairs of God. Therefore God has set aside the Sabbath to lead us to think of another world—an exercise essential to our living souls."

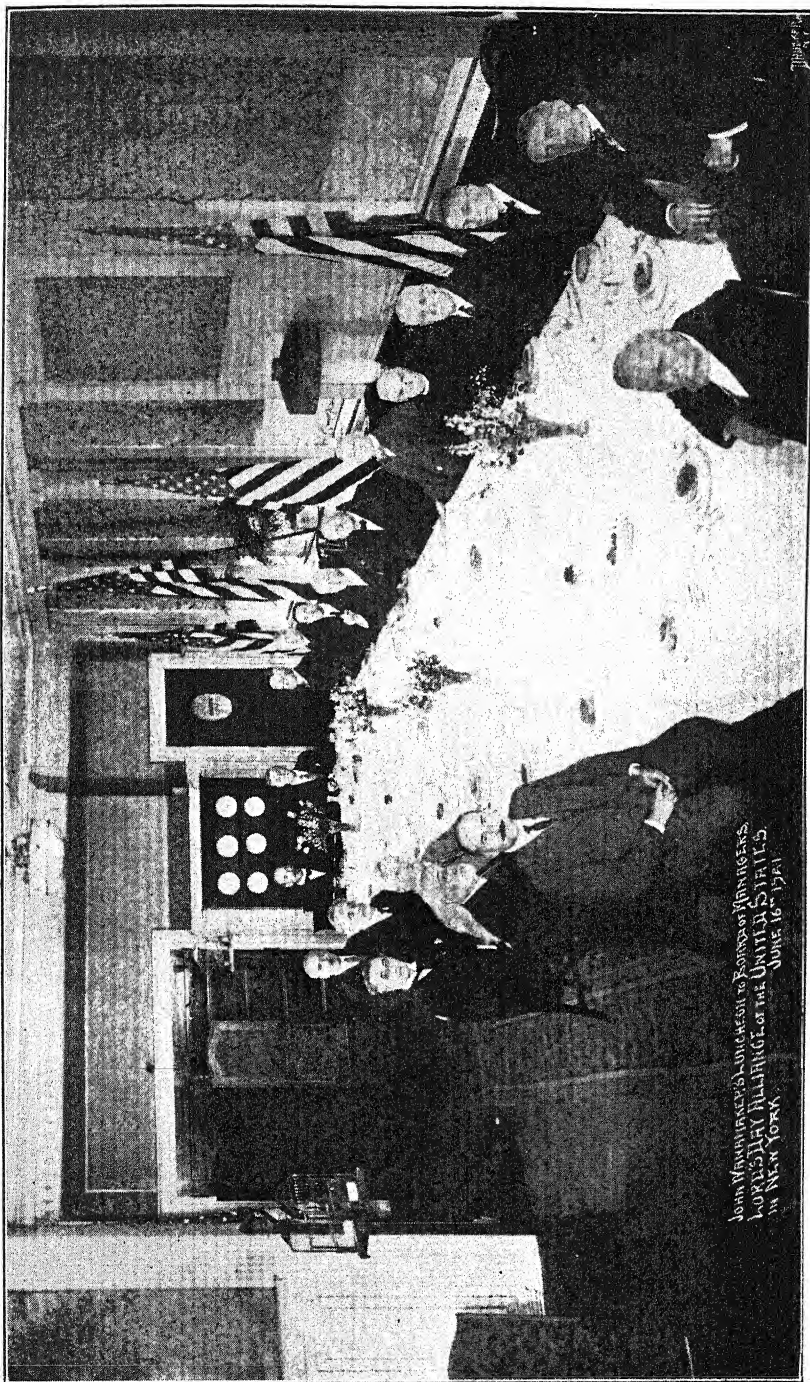
An early example of Wanamaker's steadfastness to principle is his attitude toward Sunday opening at the time of the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. His heart was set for years upon making the Centennial a success, and none worked harder than he. But he fought Sunday opening tooth and nail, and did not hesitate to risk losing valuable supporters. Against great odds he won out.<sup>1</sup>

He was a believer in the work of the Philadelphia Sabbath Association, of which he was president for forty years, and of the Lord's Day Alliance in New York, the Board of Directors of which he had the habit of entertaining at luncheon in his private office. He served on the committee on Sabbath observance of the Presbyterian General Assembly.

How he lived up to his convictions is shown by his refusal to advertise on Sunday. He was the undisputed pioneer in every other form of newspaper advertising. But he would never have anything to do with Sunday newspapers. He would not read them, of course, and he did not believe it was right to encourage them by putting store advertisements in them. Up to the end of his life he was urged by newspaper people and by some of his own employees to modify his rule. Reports were submitted to him as late as 1919 showing how other great stores had extraordinary crowds as a result of Sunday advertising, and pointing out the serious handicap his own people labored under when they were forbidden to do anything to meet this competition. John Wanamaker was adamant, and his son Rodman has followed the same policy.

That Sunday advertising was essential or ever would be essential to business John Wanamaker flatly denied. He did not seem to suffer by failure to use the Sunday newspapers. And he would have been able to cite the only other

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, p. 159.



John Wadsworth's Luncheon to Board of Managers,  
 Lord's Day Alliance of the United States, 1125  
 in New York, June 16, 1921.

LUNCHEON GIVEN BY HON. JOHN WADSWORTH TO THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES, IN NEW YORK, JUNE 16TH, 1921

(Photo. by Drucker & Co.)



merchant in America comparable with him, had he cared to do so, who built his life and business upon the same rigid Sabbatarian principles as Wanamaker. Marshall Field never gave an advertisement to a Sunday paper; and with a business increasing every year more than that of any other department store in Chicago, the firm has followed the policy of the founder.

One of the greatest blows Wanamaker ever had was when his son, Thomas B. Wanamaker, decided to issue a Sunday edition of *The North American*. The father fought hard against the project. Tom, safely out of the way in Paris, wrote to his father that it simply had to be, that no newspaper could live in the twentieth century without a Sunday edition. John Wanamaker countered by offering to buy the paper. Tom refused. After *The North American* finally came out on a Sunday, Wanamaker went before the pastors and elders of Bethany and had the following minute entered:

Elder John Wanamaker at a meeting of the Session held in connection with the Communion Service, Sabbath Evening, September 29, stated that he had felt greatly perplexed and embarrassed by the determination of his son, Thomas B. Wanamaker, to issue a Sunday edition of *The North American*. Mr. Wanamaker stated that he had no interest in the ownership of *The North American* and that it was entirely owned and controlled by Thomas B. Wanamaker.

Elder Wanamaker further stated that when it came to his knowledge that it was the purpose of his son to issue a Sunday edition of his paper, he had used every endeavor to persuade his son, out of regard for his father's convictions and public position regarding the observance of the Sabbath, to give up such a purpose, going so far as to offer to purchase from his son the entire property of *The North American* that he might be able to control the policy of the paper, or to make good any supposed financial loss that might result from the abandonment of the purpose.

After hearing the statement of Elder Wanamaker, the Session unanimously voted to record it in the minutes of Bethany Church, and also to record the sympathy of the Pastors and Elders of the Church with

our beloved Brother in this peculiar trial. We feel confident that the influence of our fellow-worker will be increased rather than impaired by the deep sorrow he has been called upon to endure and by the faithful protest he has felt compelled to make. It is the prayer of his brethren that the Master may show him very soon that this severe trial has a gracious purpose.

Although he was so deliciously frank and humble in confiding in others and in explaining to others his own stand in questions of Christian conduct, he did not allow fanatics to dictate to him. *The North American* incident illustrates how John Wanamaker felt and acted, for conscience's sake, in an extremely complicated situation. There was much to be said on his son Tom's side, from the worldly point of view, and the father knew it. But he preferred to lose money rather than see a principle he held dear violated.

On the other hand, he was firm, though gentle, when his associates in the Philadelphia Sabbath Association went too far in their interpretation of what constituted Sabbath-breaking. For instance, in 1917, moving pictures were introduced in the summertime in Bethany Sunday School; and the church advertisement stated that there would be "patriotic or religious moving pictures." Dr. Mutchler, secretary of the Sabbath Association, wrote a vehement protest to the Bethany superintendent, ending with a virtual threat of prosecution under the 1794 blue law. Wanamaker answered promptly that Dr. Mutchler was wrong in stating that Bethany people did not like the pictures and that "the principal protest was a very impertinent and extremely injudicious letter of a minister, being from the Rev. Mr. Shelley, if I have his name correctly, which you brought with you when you first saw me on the subject." He concluded:

With my old friendship for you and a lifetime of devotion to the support of the Word of God—in a feeble way, perhaps—in maintaining

respect for the Sabbath, I have only to say further that I will be quite prepared to meet the apparent threat of your letter to consider the subject from the legal standpoint which you have raised.

Wanamaker believed that the Christian Lord's Day was the successor of the Jewish Sabbath, and in his teaching at Bethany he used Old Testament texts to justify his contention as to how the Lord's Day should be observed. Although he was an admirer of Martin Luther, he either did not know or did not accept the Lutheran view of Sunday. In 1899 he wrote to his Bible Union from Paris:

Paris people are not church-goers, and even Christian travelers are too often like the summering holidayers, neglectful of Church privileges; as though sight-seeing, driving, and walking form such an observance of the Sabbath as the Lord calls us to.

Just as he linked up total abstinence with patriotism, he was able to make himself believe that the Old Testament idea of Sabbath-keeping was as necessary to a nation's well-being as patriotism, and that it was the function of the United States to bear witness to the world of the sanctity of the Sabbath day. At a luncheon the year before his death he said:

"Our flag is all around us, and what a beautiful flag, preaching a sermon to the world. But we need something more than that flag. The thing we need is to know and live the meaning of those words, 'Ye shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary.'"

This conviction led John Wanamaker to support by voice and purse every effort made by religious organizations to uphold the old Pennsylvania "blue law" of 1794. He justified this attitude as follows:

Reverence is the very soul of religion, and when our children lose the sacred regard for God's day, their reverence for the name of God and the word of God and the house of God must inevitably diminish to the same extent. The preservation of the Christian Sabbath requires

that Christian people must organize for this purpose to resist the powerful organizations which are formed to destroy our salutary Sunday law. This law is by no means intended to compel anybody to attend Church or accept the Gospel. It simply protects the Christian element of our population to which the nation owes its existence and its perpetuation, in its inalienable right to worship God on this Holy Day, unmolested by secular traffic and the distractions of the world. It also guarantees to laboring men a day of rest each week, which unscrupulous and powerful corporations dare not ruthlessly ignore. God pity the masses of our toilers, if this, their one strong arm of kindly protection, shall be withdrawn from their defense.

As in the case of total abstinence, scriptural and moral arguments were mixed up with economic and social grounds in defense of Sabbath legislation. Wanamaker's interest in the Lord's Day Alliance, extending over thirty-four years, was directed toward defense of legislation already on the statute books to keep Sunday free from amusements and unnecessary work. Frequently he spoke of foreign and un-Christian influences trying to undermine the life and spirit of the nation by introducing the continental idea of Sunday. He urged the Christian Sabbath "to oppose Bolshevistic tendencies." He used to write to the newspapers; he would draw up resolutions; he would pay legal expenses. In this work he felt that he was acting as a patriot as well as a churchman.

As late as 1917 the name of John Wanamaker appeared on a report to the Presbyterian General Assembly at Dallas, Texas, on Sabbath observance, and one of the resolutions indorsed by him was:

That the General Assembly hereby reiterates its emphatic condemnation of the Sunday newspaper, and urges the members of the Presbyterian Church to refuse to subscribe to it or read it or advertise in it.

In the last year of his life there was nothing that he was more interested in than the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial.

He at first suggested it in 1916. He was the only surviving member of the Centennial Board. He hoped to live to see a great international exposition held in Philadelphia in 1926. It was his belief that the man who should run this was Secretary Hoover of the Department of Commerce. Solicitor-General James M. Beck approached Mr. Hoover, and telegraphed:

Secretary Hoover suggests Sunday evening, December 11. Will this suit Mr. Wanamaker? Answer.

Mr. Wanamaker replied that he would not be willing to attend a dinner for business purposes on Sunday evening, and that Mr. Hoover would have to come some other day.

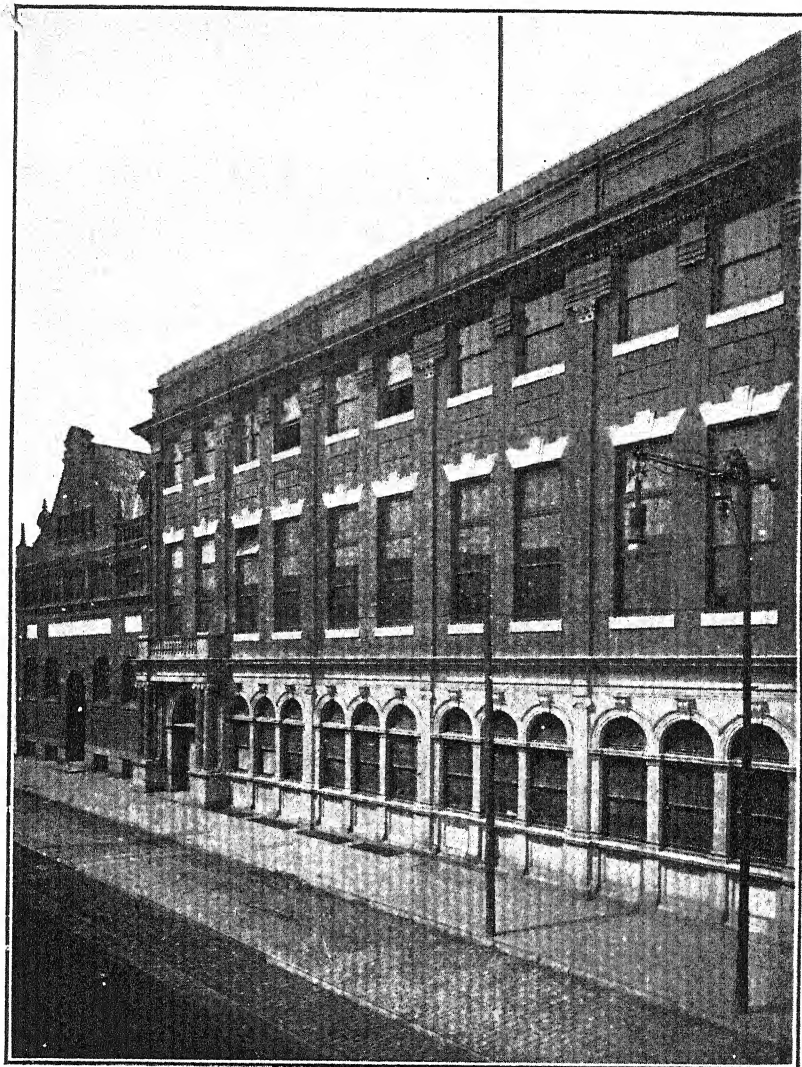
## CHAPTER XXIV

### BETHANY

THE story of Bethany, like that of the Wanamaker business, if an attempt were made to tell it adequately, would leave us little space for anything else. The biographer, therefore, whose interest is the life and character of the man, makes no excuse for omissions.

We have already seen how vital and engrossing a part Bethany played during the formative years of Wanamaker's career, and how this interest continued unbroken through the momentous decade and the crowded period of Cabinet service. It remained the same till the very end of his life.<sup>1</sup> After 1893 there were more frequent and prolonged sojourns in Europe; New York claimed much time; and a rest in Florida was prescribed in the late winter and early spring of every year. But these enforced absences did not lessen Wanamaker's interest in his church and Sunday school and by a remarkable *tour de force* he managed to maintain his contact with Bethany folk in such a way that his personality still dominated the growing and changing activities of the great work he had planted and watered at Twenty-second and Bainbridge Streets. He would not have called it a *tour de force*. It only appears that to one who studies Bethany objectively as a Wanamaker activity. He would not have called it that because

<sup>1</sup> In the latter days Wanamaker said to a reporter: "I have made it the rule of my life to be in my regular place each Lord's Day when in health and in the country, believing that Paul was inspired to write that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. For four years while Postmaster-General I traveled nearly one hundred thousand miles in order to be present each week at my own church."



THE BETHANY BROTHERHOOD HOUSE, AND THE JOHN WANAMAKER BRANCH OF THE  
FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA



Sunday Morning Dec 5/97 12.15

I have just come up to my room from  
hearing Mr Wicely's sermon & after prayer  
am led to write this that I hereby

Resolve - To so order my life that I will  
give at least one full evening of each  
week to personal thinking planning  
& pressing of the Bethany School &  
College work - This in addition to my  
regular duties as an Elder & member of the Church

Further I Resolve -

To not let any day pass without doing  
something aggressive towards securing  
one or more of the properties at 23<sup>d</sup> St & those adjacent  
to the Church for the extension of the  
Bethany work - and when secured will immediately  
proceed to build, or help me to be faithful

I will read this paper every night & examine  
my conduct of the day by it

Wm H. Haman

to him it was not that. If any burden he carried was ever irksome (and we doubt if any was) Bethany was certainly the least irksome. He loved the people there. He wanted to keep in close personal contact with them. He believed in the Church's mission. As with his business, he felt that it must constantly grow, seize upon every opportunity for service, and adapt itself to whatever conditions it faced—not after the conditions were actually confronting it but anticipating them.

Not from a sense of duty, but because he had a real joy in being what he called "folksy," he refused to allow himself to fall into the easy habit of the busy man to regard people collectively. All who attended Bethany Church and Sunday School were individuals, just as much his friends as he was their friend.<sup>1</sup> He felt that his duties as senior elder of the church and superintendent of the Sunday school were not fulfilled by helping the pastors to run things and by conducting services. He prided himself on calling people by name, from oldest to youngest, to take them by the hand, to know how they were getting along; and none was more patient in listening to the troubles of others. In many instances he knew by their first names, not only the children, but the mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers. On his sixtieth birthday he told a friend that he could call "about four thousand people down there by name, and associate each one with his family

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Bible Union writes us: "On July 4, 1899, we were walking with our children on a street near Bethany, when some one called after us. In a carriage and pair, with coachman and footman, Mr. Wanamaker was beckoning us to come and meet President Harrison, to whom he said, 'These are some of my people.'" In his diary, dated Plaza Hotel, New York, February 10, 1909, is this entry: "I am going to bed very early to get all the rest I can for to-morrow, that I may go over to the Bethany Fifty-first Anniversary. Of course I shall not speak with my weak throat, but if I am able to just be around it will please the old people who have like myself been there so long."

or business or with some connection so that they are sure I really do know them." He did not regard this as a feat of memory. He explained it by saying that he was "interested in them—why shouldn't I know them?"

In dealing with an immense church organization and its extension work it was necessary for him to have a system. He kept address books, with notes about people, and as the work grew, he had professional helpers to preserve the constant contact with his Bethany and John Chambers Memorial friends. There was also a secretary for the Bible Union. This machinery, however, would have availed little in maintaining the personal touch had he not studied the reports made to him and had he not seized every opportunity for greetings. At church and Sunday school anniversaries, Easter, Christmas, and other celebrations and gatherings (there were many of them) he gave out the cards or other tokens prepared for the occasion. His handshake was never impersonal, and the "Merry Christmas" or "Happy New Year" was said with a smile and some word to every one. Through all the years unbroken association with "Bethany folk" enabled him to make them feel that he was one of them. Until her health failed Mrs. Wanamaker was his invaluable aid in this intimate work. As an elder of the church he passed the bread and wine at communion services up to the last year of his life, and he found time to visit the sick and to attend funerals.

At Sunday-school picnics he marched ahead of the band from the train to the grounds, stood at the gate and greeted everybody, and at luncheon passed from table to table. No amusement or game failed to get his attention, and he loved to give out jumping ropes and hoops to the little children. He invited the members of the Roman Legion of the Bible Union to Lindenhurst every Labor Day, and devoted him-

self to them when they came.<sup>1</sup> For the men of the John Chambers Memorial Church he gave a dinner on Lincoln's birthday.<sup>2</sup> There were Lindenhurst picnics, and occasional dinners in town, for the choir and orchestra. He made much of Children's Day, Mother's Day, and patriotic days; and he inaugurated an Old Folk's Day at Bethany.<sup>3</sup> The Dawn Service in the early hours of the new year was his especial joy. Believing that "God giveth the increase," he was faithful at prayer meeting, and used to urge others to attend. It was his care to see that the Sunday-school children joined the church, and he made these occasions an opportunity for reaching their parents.

The Bethany correspondence in the private files is amazing in the number and variety of the letters and their range of half a century. It is an example of the old adage that

<sup>1</sup>The Lindenhurst picnics grew into a great feature of the Bethany Brotherhood, looked forward to keenly by all those who qualified for an invitation by committing to memory a chapter of the book of Romans. Wanamaker called them his "Roman Legion." He generally gave them books as a souvenir of their "day in the woods." That Wanamaker enjoyed these outings is evident from his diary. In 1909 we find: "About noon they began to come, those dear men, little groups continuing to file up through the woods here and there, and so the lawn and fields were humming with their laughter and shouts." And in 1911: "I have only a short morning, as I must go back home to play host to the men who are invited by the noon train, but who always begin to come about nine. We shall have a fine crowd—and sports, followed by hot corn and roast potatoes from the ashes of the fire burning at the quarry. Robert Jackson will operate on the old croquet ground upon watermelons, sandwiches, and cider barrel, to say nothing of the cows, and several pear and apple trees that he shakes merrily."

<sup>2</sup>The Lincoln dinners were begun in 1911, as an anniversary celebration of the Men's Friendly Union and were held in the church. Wanamaker always invited fifty or more outsiders; and the most prominent Philadelphians accepted invitations. An elaborate menu card was prepared, and there were generally souvenirs in the form of books. The 1915 dinner was addressed by Billy Sunday, who succeeded in getting many diners to "hit the trail."

<sup>3</sup>Wanamaker provided transportation for all who could not otherwise come, and luncheon at the church so that they could stay to Sunday school. He made the principal address, and gave souvenirs to the old folks, and once a large print copy of the Psalms especially ordered in London in the Coronation year. After Mrs. Wanamaker's death the gift was a book that she prized and found inspiration in—*Daily Strength for Daily Needs*.

the busiest man has the most time, and reveals, more than anything else with the exception of the Friendly Inn correspondence, the genuine and vital interest of John Wanamaker in his fellow-men. We shall not attempt to quote from these files, nor from the circular letters Wanamaker sent out periodically to the various Bethany organizations. From the Bethany papers we glean letters sent back for publication, describing his travels and his thoughts for Bethany when he was on the ocean and at European watering-places. Letters to individuals were published, for example:

Norge, July 10, 1899

MIDNATSSOLENSLAND

Dear little man of the Golden Text and Verses: Did you ever have a man away up here among the ice and bears and whales, 4,000 miles away, thinking about you? Well, that's what I am doing. You think of me sometimes and you see I think of you. The sun never goes down any farther here than you see it in the picture, and it is daylight all night long and hard to sleep. I am glad we both live at Bethany.

Your Teacher,

JOHN WANAMAKER.

The diaries show that when he was traveling, and especially when he was at Carlsbad, he had the habit of spending some time every day getting off picture postcards to Bethany friends. He would keep steadily at it, writing each one in his own hand, and in the space reserved for correspondence he would send personal messages. He knew that Brotherhood men, treasuring these cards, would compare notes. He had them classified according to trades, and he would pick out cards that would suggest or illustrate a message referring to each man's occupation. He devoted all his spare minutes to this task. The average membership of the Brotherhood was twelve hundred; and they were only a quarter—or less—of the Bethany enrollment. To

have written these cards one year would have been a feat to the ordinary man. Wanamaker did it year after year. He never stopped.

As much as he could he went to the homes of Bethany people. This was how he started the work when he was twenty, young and obscure. As he prospered, he did not give up the hours, snatched at odd times, of visiting his people in their homes. He liked to do it, and he knew that all the money he spent at Bethany would count for nothing if he gave up the visiting. A fine building, with fine music and fine preaching, would never make a great Sunday school and church. He used to tell the pastors that when he felt they were letting up on their pastoral visitation, and he set them the example of unremitting zeal. He accomplished a great deal of the visiting—as he accomplished everything else—by using his head. On the way in from Lindenhurst he would stop to see shut-ins and sick people near whose homes he would have to pass, bringing them flowers; and when he went to Bethany on Sundays and in the evenings, he always had a few people to see coming and going. He never stayed long, but just to have John Wanamaker appear for a moment brought joy and comfort to his people. All this we know from the touching letters he received. There are indications in his diary of how he found time for folks. On his way to a Masonic banquet in 1903, where a thousand had gathered to do him honor, he

Went to Mrs. ——'s and met about 25 of her kin celebrating the kindness of her Scotch lord of a husband, a simple-hearted carpenter. I took coffee and a bit of cake she had saved for me. All but a crumb that I had to take to let her say I ate something in her house I slipped in my pocket.

Dr. Francis E. Clark, father of the Christian Endeavor

movement, was once asked to preach at Bethany when the pulpit was vacant. Of his experiences that day he wrote:

He asked me, in an interregnum between pastorates at Bethany Church, to preach there one Sunday and stay with him. I thought I knew what a busy Sunday was, having frequently had from four to seven services in one day. But that one in Bethany was the record in my experience, with nine services, and a sermon or short talk at each of them.

But Mr. Wanamaker outdid me, and attended eleven services that day—a regular diet with him. He had his lunch sent over to the church, as he could not afford time to go home, though it was not far away.

On the way home from the last afternoon service he said, "I must look up one of my Sunday-school scholars; I have missed her for two or three Sundays." Who would have thought he would miss one lamb in a flock of thousands? We soon found the house in a poor quarter, and climbed two or three flights of stairs; and there in a clean but very scantily furnished room he found the little girl whom he had missed. He chided the girl for not having sent him word of her illness. "Oh," said she, "Mr. Wanamaker, you were so busy I could not." Before we went we all kneeled down on the bare floor, while in simple words he asked God's blessing on her and her family and Sunday-school class.

The busy day to which Dr. Clark referred was the carrying out of this schedule:

- 9:30 A.M.—Met the leaders of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew and St. Philip. Spoke ten minutes.
- 9:45 A.M.—Met the Brotherhood members, 394 men. Talked twenty minutes.
- 10:15 A.M.—Spoke to the boys' junior Bible class.
- 10:45 A.M.—Sat with the men at the regular morning service and offered a prayer.
- 12:00 noon—Shook hands with those at the service.
- 12:30 P.M.—Left Bethany and went to his home, 2032 Walnut Street.
- 2:00 P.M.—Attended and spoke at a meeting of the Tithesmen of the Bible Union.
- 2:30 P.M.—Opened the Sunday school.
- 3:10 P.M.—Made a short address to the Juniors.
- 3:15 P.M.—Expounded the lesson before the Bible Union.
- 4:10 P.M.—Closed the Sunday-school services with a short talk.

4:25 P.M.—Conducted the 20-minute closing afternoon “experience” service.

4:45 P.M.—Shook hands with those at the service.

5:30 P.M.—Started for his home.

7:30 P.M.—Attended the song service.

7:45 P.M.—Attended regular evening service.

8:45 P.M.—Spoke twenty minutes at close of service.

9:00 P.M.—Shook hands with those at service.

9:30 P.M.—Went home.

Is it any wonder that Thomas B. Wanamaker used to say of his father that after two Sundays at Bethany, with a week at business thrown in between, the benefit of ninety days’ rest would be dissipated in nine?<sup>1</sup> As the years brought greater burdens in church and business and as John Wanamaker’s position in the world demanded the expenditure of much time and energy in social activities outside of Bethany, it would have been natural and reasonable to expect that he would gradually delegate church duties to others, and withdraw from all but formal church attendance. But it was quite the other way. As in his business, he kept expanding at Bethany, and he never asked any one to assume burdens that he was not ready to share. Because in this respect he was unique among Americans of his time, Bethany was unique.

The Bethany activities are so numerous that we cannot mention them all.<sup>2</sup> Many of the most interesting and permanent features of Protestant church and Sunday-school work originated at Bethany. Wanamaker was no less pro-

<sup>1</sup> John Wanamaker disputed vigorously the truth of this assertion. He recognized his son’s solicitude, and appreciated it. The relations between the father and son were exceptionally close for two generations associated in the same business. But he used to say that “Tom doesn’t understand.” The Bethany Sunday, he declared, was his “best way of resting.”

<sup>2</sup> How true this is will readily be grasped when we state that in the preparation of this biography, from the papers of John Wanamaker, we have made two thousand cards concerning Bethany Church and its extension work.

lific in conceiving and successful in launching innovations in the church than in the business field. Bethany was the first large institutional church in the United States. Mission extension work started almost simultaneously with the foundation of the church. As early as 1874 there was an athletic corps. Bethany Sunday School assumed social as well as purely religious activities, and established evangelistic tents, a rescue mission, a seashore home, a daily vacation Bible school, and evening classes on week-day nights. There were organizations for home and foreign missionary effort. Bethany people visited hospitals and prisons. The Sunday school was conceived of and developed as an institution for adults fully as much as for children. A pastor's and a superintendent's class were formed. For grown-ups there was a Bible Union in the afternoon and for men only the Brotherhood in the morning before the regular church service. Of the First Penny Savings Bank and Bethany College, which later became the Wanamaker Institute, we have spoken elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

The most remarkable Bethany organization, which has endured to the present time and which has remained, unlike the Penny Savings Bank and the Wanamaker Institute, a phase of the church's activities, is the Bethany Brotherhood. It was organized in September, 1890, as a branch of the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, founded by a pastor in Reading, Pa.<sup>2</sup> This was while Wanamaker was Postmaster-General. On the first Sunday he gathered twenty-seven men together, and explained to them the purposes of the organization. He assured them that he would meet faithfulness with faithfulness, despite the fact that he was a government official, burdened with many cares. The challenge was met, and at the end of the first decade nine

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 144-5; vol. ii, pp. 221-7, 290-94.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Rufus W. Miller, D.D., who died in 1925.

hundred men were attending the Sunday-morning service and were publishing a monthly paper.

This encouraged Wanamaker to build upon the site of the original Bethany Church on South Street a social clubhouse for Brotherhood men. He equipped the building with shuffleboards, billiard and pool tables, a room for games, and a reading room with magazines and newspapers, on the ground floor; a museum and auditorium on the second floor; a dining room and kitchen on the third floor; and a roof garden with comfortable chairs for lounging. In the basement was a swimming pool. To the west of the Brotherhood building he put up a two-story library, with stacks for fifty thousand volumes and a large and bright reading room for neighborhood use, which he offered to the city. It is now the John Wanamaker Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. It was his idea that Brotherhood activities should go on through all the week, and that the members of his class should have a real club. He instituted a savings fund, and started a building and loan association, whose assets were over \$250,000 within ten years.

Wanamaker took the deepest interest in the fortunes of the members of the Brotherhood, keeping in close touch with all who were ill or out of work. He sent them to hospitals at his own expense and helped them to find work when they were unemployed. His personal postcards and his letters to be read on Sunday mornings, sent from abroad and in the last years from Florida, made the men feel that he was always near to them.<sup>1</sup> The men of the Friendly

<sup>1</sup> In May, 1906, writing from Carlsbad, Wanamaker said: "I am laboring to break the back of the self-imposed duty of the men's postals. I have done about 400, and have yet 850 to do. The fitting of the cards to the men takes much time and the writing is more difficult this third year. I can only do about 15 an hour. They have to be addressed and my message written on the face, and I must do it all myself. Dr. Dickey offers to help, but that would not do. I must have spent, all told, 100 hours on this work

Union used to serenade him on Christmas Eve. We find this mention in the diary:

Christmas, 1912, in the old front room where I slept last night to hear the first words of the morning Christmas carol of my faithful men from the lots. I had more than an hour with them in the basement until bright daylight, over their coffee and rolls.

It is the common history of American cities that neighborhoods have changed radically and startlingly. Not only business, but also a different type of people have encroached upon and transformed residential sections formerly inhabited by a population of purely British and northern European stocks. The flocking North of negroes and the immigration of millions of Italians, Slavs, and Jews from eastern Europe gradually ousted the old residents from their homes, and as the younger generation grew up it went to newer sections. Churches, with splendid buildings and equipment, were left without the parishioners who had filled them. Bethany was no exception to the rule. The problem was already becoming acute when Wanamaker was in his prime. Bethany could count upon sentiment and loyalty to retain its older membership. But the younger people, with their children, could not be expected to continue to come long distances to church and Sunday school. Wanamaker foresaw that Bethany in the twentieth century would not be the neighborhood church, crowded to the doors, that it had been in the nineteenth century. Under his leadership, far-seeing and courageous, the church adapted itself to new conditions. Every nerve was strained, of course, to keep those who were already on its rolls and to bring in new blood at Twenty-second and Bainbridge Streets. The unusual character of the church of remembrance of the men—say 4 days of 24 hours each if all put together.” And on board the *Campania*, returning home, on July 8 of the same year, he said, “I have written 813 more postcards to the Brotherhood members, every one different.”

and its services still drew people. But there was a duty owing to the new generation to give them the Bethany spirit and atmosphere in their own neighborhood.

On July 9, 1885, Bethany Church established a mission in a tent at Gray's Ferry Road near Carpenter Street. In the course of the next decade all the region to the south was built up. A new Presbyterian Church was needed in the locality, and Wanamaker decided to build a Bethany Memorial Chapel at Twenty-eighth and Morris Streets as a thank-offering when the Philadelphia store was saved from the great Market Street fire of 1897. Ground was broken in the spring of 1901. Wanamaker laid the corner stone on August 10 of that year. The church was completed and dedicated as the John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church on October 19, 1902, with a membership of several hundred and a regular Sunday-school attendance of over a thousand. It was built as an institutional church, with an auditorium seating twelve hundred, a Sunday-school building, public reading room, kindergarten room, gymnasium and shower baths, and dining room and kitchen. In writing the announcements for the dedication of the new church Wanamaker called it "the New House of the Lord," but later he changed the name to "the Church of the Love of God."

In 1911 he founded for the men of the neighborhood, who he felt ought to have an organization similar to his Brotherhood at Bethany, the Men's Friendly Union, in which he was always deeply interested and whose services he attended when he could. It was to the members of this organization that he gave the annual dinner on Lincoln's birthday. He provided instruments and a teacher for a Friendly Union band, and in 1915 he arranged for them to have an athletic field at Twenty-eighth and Tasker Streets, with baseball diamond, tennis and handball courts,

quoit grounds, a running track, and a grand stand seating fifteen hundred. He wrote the orders of worship for the Union, and gave it the motto, "Help the other man."

The trend of Bethany population was to West Philadelphia. When he believed that enough Presbyterians were settled in the region of Fifty-second Street to justify starting a movement for a new church, and the need for this was proved by a successful series of tent services in the summer of 1905, he purchased the entire block on Spruce Street, from Fifty-third to Fifty-fourth, for a Bethany Temple. The new church was organized on February 25, 1906, and a building seating one thousand was erected in 1910. In 1920, Sunday-school buildings, a memorial to World War veterans, were dedicated. Before John Wanamaker died Bethany Temple had a membership of over sixteen hundred and a Sunday school of fourteen hundred. In fifteen years its people had raised nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

The existence of these three churches, all drawing their inspiration from the same source, seemed, in Wanamaker's mind, to impose the necessity of a common organization. He did not want it ever said that Bethany had fallen off in numbers or contributions or influence. The way out was to make the three branches of the church one. His colleagues at Bethany agreed with him, and Presbytery consented to the formation of "The Bethany Collegiate Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia." When it was realized that the Bethany Temple was firmly grounded, the Bethany charter was changed by the courts, and the new organization was incorporated in June, 1908. In the original corporation there were three pastors and sixty elders; and "all titles to all properties, including endowments, except as otherwise directed by the donors," were "vested in the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church in the United States of America." This reincorporation, which included the John Chambers Memorial Church of the Love of God and Bethany Church, with all the activities of the three churches, was the realization of John Wanamaker's plan for the perpetuity and co-ordination of the work to which he had given so freely throughout his life. Vesting the property in the trustees of the General Assembly, he regarded as "the plan most likely to give security and to assure the interest of the whole church." But although the plan was approved by the church and the provision was inserted in the new charter, and although an eminent lawyer, John G. Johnson, gave Wanamaker the opinion that it could be legally done, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania refused to allow putting the properties in trust and ruled that they "must be held subject to the control and disposition of the lay members of the churches."

The collegiate form of church government, however, was carried out. As long as Wanamaker lived, the three churches remained one corporation, and were counted as one church. Wanamaker had ambitious projects for extending this system. He believed that Bethany could "keep the old downtown churches, underwriting them financially, and save what there is in them, putting something else against it." We have the stenographic notes of a conference with leading Presbyterian clergymen in 1909 on this subject. Some agreed with him; others disagreed. There is no doubt that some downtown churches could have been saved and could have been converted into "life-saving stations for the newcomers," had Wanamaker's opinion prevailed. But there were few who were willing to pay, as he always was, the price of personal service and overcoming opposition far from where men would see and cheer. Most people saw Wanamaker in the glory of his success, and either envied him or said that with his money it was natural that he could

So Morrow

The old Bethany Church at 22<sup>d</sup> + Bannbridge St.  
will observe the day as a welcome-home  
day for the returning soldiers + sailors  
over four hundred of her boys having  
been in the war

nine thirty

The Men's Brotherhood meet at

for fifty minutes beginning with a marching  
Chorus of 60 members + Oswald Christian  
Soldiers President Wanamaker leading -

Woods old Comrade George F Pentecost  
preaches at ten thirty Jordan at 7 45

Choir of one hundred always

Out of town friends and relatives over  
Sunday in the city will be at home  
in these services -

The

big singing Sunday School at 2.30.

do things that others could not. They did not realize the truth of Browning's lines, that "the deeds of a man for which we vest him, were done in the dank and the cold."

In his last days Wanamaker's letters to Bethany from Florida were as remarkable and enthusiastic as those of the middle period of his life. He carried out to the end the belief he so often expressed, that "it is easy for a man who has money to make out a check, but what people want really is sympathy more than checks." In a long telegram to his secretary from St. Petersburg, on February 9, 1919, containing a message "To the dear pastors, teachers, and scholars at Bethany," he demonstrated that he had in mind the exact figures and details of Bethany history through more than sixty years. One of his last letters from Florida, on January 26, 1922, contained this sentence, "But, dear man, no one can go away from Bethany without being lonesome."

Far from regretting how he had spent his Sundays since he was a boy in his teens, he left this testimony:

I have been credited with doing much for the Sabbath School; but, when I look back over my life, I feel that I have never done half the good for the Sabbath School that it has done for me.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CHURCH STATESMAN

AFTER spending four years as Postmaster-General in Harrison's Cabinet, Wanamaker could no longer be bound by Philadelphia as the sphere of his activities. He loved the city in which he had spent half a century, and remained to the end of his life faithful to his Philadelphia business and to Bethany. He continued to give the old store and the old Sunday school the first place in heart and mind, and his interest in the politics and welfare of his native city was unabated. But he entered into the great world outside of Philadelphia in a way he had never done before. We have told of his fight for the Governorship of Pennsylvania and for a seat in the United States Senate; of the founding and development of a store in New York; of the idea he cherished for seven years of extending his business to Paris and London; and of the frequent trips abroad, the forming of friendships with Englishmen, the sojourns at continental watering places, and travel in the Near East and India.

His religious interests widened in the same way as his political and business interests. It was a logical step from Presbyterian activities in Philadelphia to foreign missions; from Bethany Sunday School to world-wide Sunday-school work; from the Philadelphia Y. M. C. A. to the International Y. M. C. A. Long before he became Postmaster-General, Wanamaker was known throughout the United States as a Philadelphia merchant and Sunday-school superintendent. The Centennial Exhibition had laid the foun-

dation for a nation-wide reputation for achievement in a local field. He was known in Y. M. C. A. circles as the first regular secretary, and later patron saint of the Philadelphia branch. But in the last thirty years of his life he became a national and international figure in the religious world, and earned by his work and his talents the right to be called a church statesman.

We did not attempt to mention all the Wanamaker innovations in business when we were writing of him as a mercantile pioneer; and here we shall not list the religious and philanthropic organizations to which he belonged, in which he took some part, and of which he was benefactor. Interested in every good work, Wanamaker never turned a deaf ear to the man who came to him and asked his indorsement for any project which he felt would advance the coming of the Kingdom of God. Essentially a religious man, putting religious interests ahead of everything else, he believed that he ought not to refuse to give his name to a host of committees and organizations. Many of them wanted only his name—or a contribution! They were sometimes surprised to find that the busiest man in Philadelphia had accepted a committee membership seriously. A worthless or ineffective enterprise never kept his name long on its list; for he would go to meetings and want to know what was being done.

In his own Presbytery of Philadelphia he represented the session of Bethany Church from 1863 until his death, and was one of the most active laymen in that body. He knew the ministers and was glad to be with them, because he was thoroughly at home in their company. When serious questions arose he did not hesitate to give his opinion and urge the course that seemed wise to him. He was opposed to timidity in church extension, and also to abandoning down-

town churches.<sup>1</sup> The idea of a collegiate church, which he put through for Bethany, was unprecedented. In the last year of his life, on May 1, 1922, he was elected vice-moderator of Presbytery, a proof of his fidelity in old age, and his last public function was presiding over a meeting in that capacity. He was probably the only Presbyterian business man who ever founded four churches in his own city.<sup>2</sup>

His first commissionership to the General Assembly was in 1880, when he went to Madison, Wisconsin. In 1888, when the Assembly met in Philadelphia, Wanamaker made a stirring address, reviewing the history of Presbyterianism in the United States, and launching an appeal for \$1,000,000 for the relief of aged and disabled ministers. He called raising this fund "the war cry of the High Court of our Church," and in his peroration he brought the members of the Assembly to their knees by his unexpected ending:

"This church has been for one hundred years in the lead in the national, state, municipal, and social life of our country. Blessed men were they, our forefathers, who built so broadly and solidly under the Head of the Church. Closing up the old century let us kneel together in thanksgiving to God. Not unto us! Not unto us be the glory!"<sup>3</sup>

His personal attention to church matters and his faithful

<sup>1</sup> Where property had become very valuable, and there was only business in the neighborhood, he saw the wisdom of letting old sites go and of churches moving. But he protested in Presbytery and before committees against the Presbyterian Church's policy of giving up in localities where the population had changed. "It is nothing less than hauling down the flag," he once said. "The coming of these people is the church's opportunity and duty. They need our churches even more than they need our schools."

<sup>2</sup> Grace Church was the fourth, which was founded by "pilgrims from Bethany" in 1871. On December 21, 1921, Dr. Robert A. Hunter invited Mr. Wanamaker to speak at the fiftieth anniversary of Grace Church, as he had done at the first anniversary. Dr. Hunter, who was stated clerk of Presbytery, wrote: "You have spread your wonderful interest everywhere, not only by starting Grace, Bethany, Bethany Temple, and John Chambers Memorial, but many other organizations."

<sup>3</sup> In a political campaign speech in Pennsylvania in 1898 he spoke of his church as "the old Presbyterian Church, whose history is the record of the martyrs for the truth and of lives laid down on the battlefields."

membership on committees led to his election as vice-moderator of the General Assembly (the highest office a layman has held in the Presbyterian Church) at Eagle Lake, Indiana, in 1897. There he presided at many of the sessions. His popularity was instantly established, and he made a lasting impression as a presiding officer. One of his fellow-commissioners wrote:

He ruled the Assembly, which was filled with famous parliamentarians, with firmness yet with a pleasantry that put all present in a good humor. I don't believe he could be idle if he tried. When he escaped from the Moderator's chair, he was immediately off to Chicago to address half a dozen congregations in as many different churches and halls; or he sped away in a carriage to visit his former Indiana home and talked to two or three gatherings of old neighbors, or he hurried to Warsaw and near-by towns to tell them about the present needs of Christianity in our country.

He was one of the hosts of the General Assembly when it met again in Philadelphia in 1901; and at the 114th Assembly in New York in 1902, just after his return from India, he presided over the mass meeting for foreign missions in Carnegie Hall, and made a notable address on a program that included Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry van Dyke, and President Patton of Princeton.

Presbyterian Church affairs recur often in Wanamaker's diary, and in several committees of the General Assembly his membership and interest continued decade after decade. On November 14, 1912, he wrote, just as he would have done twenty-five years before: "I have been busy to-day with a General Assembly committee"; and on May 26, 1916, he records: "All this week and part of last I had to be at General Assembly at Atlantic City. There are 881 Ministers and Elders." Numerous letters and documents in the files indicate that after the World War he was of the opinion that the "New Era movement" in the church was what was needed. The octogenarian, like the boy in

his teens, stressed the supreme importance of evangelistic work.

It was because of his faith in the simple Gospel message that John Wanamaker took a leading part in bringing Billy Sunday to Philadelphia in 1915. He gave Sunday the same loyal and wholehearted support that he had given Moody forty years earlier. Wanamaker defended Sunday against his critics, who were legion, and declared that the power of God was in the evangelist's preaching, and that if people objected to Billy's dogmatic utterances, they were quarreling with Christ's teaching, for Billy simply repeated what Christ had taught. "Billy," he said, "takes his doctrine from the Bible and not from advanced schools of theology. Let those who deny the divine personality of Jesus make the most of it. If they can get into Heaven past these sayings of Christ, let them do so; it is not Billy Sunday's fault if he sticks to his text." Wanamaker believed that the evangelist's compensation was justified, and pointed to the great results.

Other Presbyterian activities frequently mentioned are the Social Union, the Sunday School Superintendents' Association, the Presbyterian Hospital, and the Presbyterian Orphanage. The latter two organizations at different times demanded his attention and money, and the buildings were in part erected under his supervision. His wife provided the funds for the children's ward building of the Presbyterian Hospital.<sup>1</sup> The Presbyterian Orphanage was one of

<sup>1</sup> A story comes to light in the private papers that is well worth telling. Mrs. Wanamaker's large gift to the Presbyterian Hospital came from a legacy from her father. Wanamaker had been counting on using the money temporarily for some other purpose, and thought it had been so understood. But when his wife told him what she had done, and added that she wanted him to take charge of seeing that the children's ward was built, he said nothing. And when at the same time she asked him for a contribution for the Presbyterian Orphanage, suggesting the amount she wanted him to give, he wrote her out a check. Years afterward Wanamaker said that at that particular moment he had needed the money, which his wife did not know;

Mrs. Wanamaker's great interests, and she enlisted her husband in it. One of its buildings is the Mother House, in memory of his mother. Bethany played an important part in the foundation and early maintenance of the Orphanage.

In the wider work of the church, his interest was lifelong in the Salvation Army and the Christian Endeavor Movement. He knew General Booth in London, and was always kind and generous to members of his family, the differences among whom he deplored and did his best to minimize. He admired Commander Evangeline Booth's success as an organizer and her spirit and gifts as a speaker. The work of the Salvation Army, as we have said in writing of the Friendly Inn, was what he believed that the world needed;<sup>1</sup> and, as was the case with the Y. M. C. A., he thought that an effort of this kind, with its own particular field, in no way impaired the prestige and efficiency, or invaded the domain, of organized church activities. His interest in the Christian Endeavor Movement was partly due to his wife's liking for Dr. Francis E. Clark and her belief in his mission. He attended International Christian Endeavor conventions at home and abroad,<sup>2</sup> and was a trustee of the World's C. E. Union up to the end of his life. He took great interest in the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, of which his own brotherhoods at Bethany and John Chambers became chapters. In 1915 he became vice-president of the International Council of the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip.

but he did not tell her, because he did not want "to see the beautiful smile of giving leave her face."

<sup>1</sup> The private files show that he expressed this belief in practical aid and counsel, of inestimable value to the Booths in the spread of their work in America. After his death a special issue of the *War Cry* called him one of the best friends the Salvation Army ever had. There are references to the appreciation the Army showed him in his diary. For instance: "March 24, 1911—at my desk in N. Y. The Salvation Army band is under my window, pausing on the way to a meeting to play a good night to me."

<sup>2</sup> See above, vol. ii, p. 55.

We have told elsewhere of John Wanamaker's pioneering in Y. M. C. A. and Sunday-school work and of the permanent influence he had upon the development of these two movements. After 1893 he gave more time to their national and international phases.

Strictly speaking, there was no time in his life that Wanamaker was not interested in the world aspect of the Y. M. C. A. work. He had dreamed as a lad of going to Paris for the first universal conference in 1855,<sup>1</sup> and he had helped in forming the International Committee in 1860, of which he was elected chairman at the New Orleans convention in the same year. Sir George Williams was the friend with whom he spent most of his time in London, and Wanamaker made a special point of attending the annual meetings of the British Y. M. C. A. whenever he could. But his entry into the world-wide Association work began in June, 1894, when he made a speech at the fiftieth anniversary at Windsor Castle, where the delegates were received by Queen Victoria. That same year he made possible the solid foundation of the work in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1899 Wanamaker was again offered the chairmanship of the International Committee, and wrote on June 7:

I am just recovered enough to be about my room. I thank you indeed for your brotherly greeting and offer of the chairmanship of the International Association. But I am loath to take it up until I am convinced that there is no way to retain the worthy veteran leader, Mr. Jacobs. He is in the city now and I am conferring with him on the subject.

Wanamaker's first gift of a Y. M. C. A. building abroad was that of Madras in 1895. He followed it by the building for boys in Calcutta in 1901, which Dr. John R. Mott says is "considered one of the most fruitful pieces of Asso-

<sup>1</sup> In 1905—half a century later—the dream was fulfilled when he attended the semicentennial celebration in Paris.

ciation work in Asia."<sup>1</sup> He gave buildings to Seoul and Kyoto in 1909 and to Peking in 1913. But while he was contributing to buildings abroad and urging others to consider the claims of the Association in Asia, his greatest contribution to the Association was the example and impetus he gave to the extension of the work in American cities through adequate buildings and the opening of branches wherever needed. He never tired pointing out that this work was the business of the whole community, and his help and encouragement in "drives" were worth far more than money. One of his last messages to the Y. M. C. A. was in an address at the dedication of a new Philadelphia branch building in 1920, when he said:

"I have no regrets for having become one of the first members of the Y. M. C. A. in America and of the first that got on its feet—the Philadelphia Association. . . . This building will be fine and home-like, where young men will feel that a human heart is beating, touching life with a human note. This house rising in the eyes of all the people will be a daily speech to the city and state that it stands here as the House of the Love of God—God's people are its builders, and their thoughts, their gifts, and their prayers will be wrought into swords to cut down evil, and to lay true foundations of permanent prosperity for all time to come. The purpose of this non-sectarian, undenominational association is to supplement, to strengthen the work of the Church of God. On its roomy platform we may all stand together for this common purpose—the uplifting of every man's condition."

In 1895 Wanamaker was elected president of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association and served for twelve years. In 1907, at the Uniontown Convention, he

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. ii, pp. 65-6.

insisted that H. J. Heinz take the presidency. But he became chairman of the Board, and continued to attend conventions in different parts of the state whenever it was possible for him to do so. Some of his speeches at these gatherings of Sunday-school teachers are the most remarkable he ever delivered. He prepared them with great care, and generally had them printed beforehand. Then he would revise them. Into them he poured the cream of his thinking for the year. He emphasized public education, faithfulness in fulfilling the duties of citizenship, and zeal for social service, as factors in bringing about better living conditions in America and in winning the world to Christ. But he never failed to subordinate all these things to Bible reading and study and to simple evangelical preaching.

None who reads his address at the Reading convention of 1899 will contest Wanamaker's right to be called a church statesman. In some respects it was the most notable address of his long career as a public speaker. He reviewed in lucid and graphic language the religious development of the nineteenth century, taking up the wider use of the Bible and its translation into all languages; the extension of missions, the Sunday school, and the Young Men's Christian Association into all parts of the earth, and the remarkable success that was attending the efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which he prophesied would end in eradicating the drink evil. He compared these developments with inventions in the secular field, and with the spread of education, through university extension, kindergartens, manual training, and industrial schools. His last address was given at the Altoona convention in 1921 on the day which he said "marks sixty-three years, eight months, and one day of my superintendency of Bethany Sunday School."

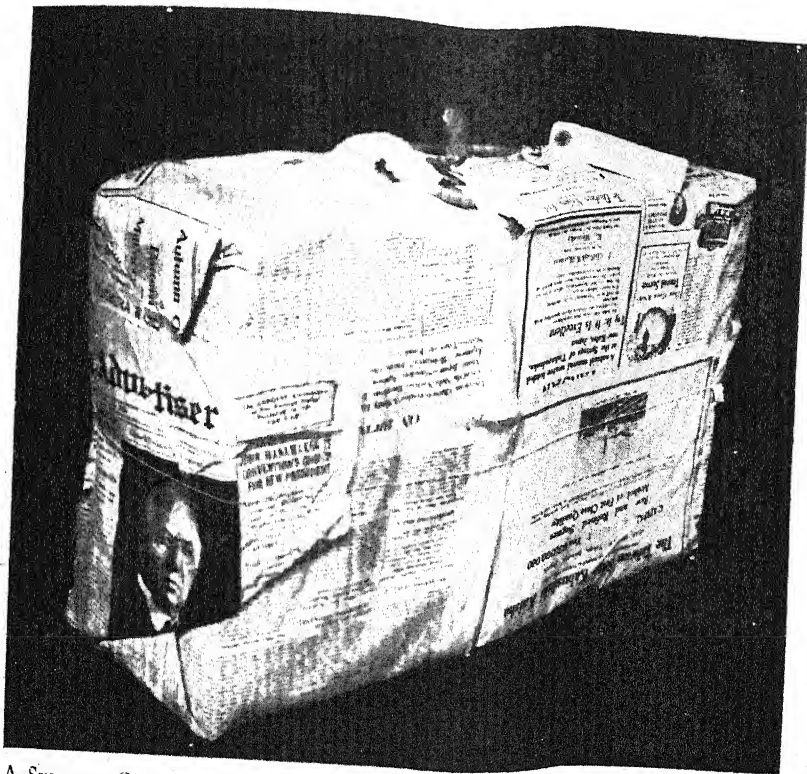
In Sunday-school work, as in Y. M. C. A. work, his inter-

est grew from Philadelphia and Pennsylvania to the whole world. In 1904 he was elected a vice-president of the World's Sunday School Association, and enjoyed attending several of the triennial conventions. Upon the sudden death of H. J. Heinz in May, 1919, when the annual meeting of the Executive Committee was in session, Wanamaker was chosen to take his place. It was his privilege to issue the call for the World's Executive Committee to meet at the Imperial Hotel, at Tokyo, on October 4, 1920. Wanamaker intended to be present at the Tokyo convention, and made his plans. It had been the dream of his life to visit the Far East; but in August, when it was realized that his wife's long illness might prove fatal, he renounced the trip. The death of Mrs. Wanamaker did not make him reconsider the decision. The blow had been too great for him and he was too old, though he would not admit it, for a voyage halfway round the world to be beneficial. To the organizing secretary in Tokyo, he wrote:

I had to give up the expectation of going to Japan by reason of the illness and now the death of Mrs. Wanamaker. I cannot express to you the great disappointment it is to me, as I had hoped that Mrs. Wanamaker would be spared and that I might make the visit to your great country and its splendid men. I had a very great vision about Japan and it was on my heart in a strong way that I might have a blessing in going thither, but it is ordered otherwise and I have to submit.

Despite his absence, when the Sunday-school representatives of the nations gathered in Japan, Wanamaker's name was the only one they considered for president. He was elected by men and women of thirty nations to lead the world in the Sunday-school movement. When he received the cablegram, he turned to a friend and said:

"Queer how things happen in the world. The one to whom this news would have meant everything is gone. She was



A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE—FOUND WHEN UNWAPPING ON JULY 20TH, 1921, AN INVOICE OF WICKER EFFECTS, SHIPPED TO THE STORE FROM JAPAN. PART OF ORIGINAL CARTON, WRAPPED IN THE *Japan Advertiser* OF YOKOHAMA

10

10

1

with me sixty-two years ago when I made my first beginning as a Sunday-school superintendent. Could the lad on South Street have dreamed that one day the Sunday schools of the world, meeting in far-off Japan, would call on him to lead them?"

## CHAPTER XXVI

### AN INTERPRETER

IN April, 1912, to the Fifth International Congress of Chambers of Commerce, Wanamaker said:

"I hail the coming of the day when we shall have but one postage stamp the world over, but one system of measurement, but one coin, and but one language. It seems a great hope, and yet the truth is that we all have the same purpose—to elevate our countries—and a great readiness to understand one another and to be friends. The world is growing warmer-hearted and we are getting closer together. Let us stand against war; let us stand for peace; let us be careful not to misinterpret one another. We must believe in one another, and work together for the good, not of some little corner, but of the whole earth, from the rising of the sun to its going down."

These words, foreshadowing the movement for international co-operation that swept the world only a few years later, are an accurate interpretation of the spirit of the era that immediately preceded the World War. Men were longing for peace, for better international understanding, and for world-wide co-operation to further the common good of all nations. It is but one of a hundred quotations we could adduce to show how representative Wanamaker was of the thought of his time in its prophetic aspect. The rare combination of thinker and seer made him in his last days an interpreter.

A merchant is commonly supposed to be too engrossed in his business to moralize about the world in which he



PORTRAIT OF HON. JOHN WANAMAKER, BY LEOPOLD SEYFFERT IN 1919, WHICH  
HANGS IN THE OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL AT WASHINGTON

VI

lives, and to speculate upon the ways and tendencies of humankind. It is taken for granted that merchants—that all business men, in fact—must necessarily be Marthas, so devoted to material things that they do not appraise spiritual values.

It was never that way with Wanamaker. We have seen how in his youth he did not live by bread alone. His Bethany Sundays were spent in expounding the Bible as the way of life. His main effort in business for many years was to convince the public that his store had been founded and was being run to serve the people. When he became a general storekeeper, his idea was to make Wanamaker's a social need and influence. What he accomplished was possible because he was able to bring to people's attention and make them want what he thought they ought to have. He was a mass psychologist; but he became so by studying people as individuals before he took them as groups. His stores were his laboratories; and Bethany was a laboratory, too. Later, in public life, he came to know men, their tendencies, their activities, their defects, in ways that added to what he learned about them through his wonderful opportunities as a merchant and a Sunday-school superintendent. Travel, too, played its great part. The boy who stood behind the counter in a Market Street store was transformed in sixty years to the citizen of the world, with a trenchant pen and an unusual gift as a public speaker, better qualified than most men of his day to be what he became—an interpreter.

The presidential campaign of 1912 ended disastrously for the Republican party. All that Wanamaker had striven for seemed to have been lost, but something was again aroused in the man that he had resolutely put aside in earlier years, after the Postmaster-Generalship and the Pennsylvania political campaigns, in order to concentrate his attention upon his business and his church. At the age

of seventy-five he felt that he could no longer resist the impulse of writing down and giving to the world the thoughts that came into his mind. He had to become, in tangible and permanent form, an interpreter.

Up to 1912, aside from Bethany, Wanamaker wrote and spoke spasmodically. The only consecutive speaking he had ever done was in the Pennsylvania political campaigns, when he went on day after day for months, hammering on the same theme and never repeating himself. He had published no book. His name appeared only under statements about the stores and their policies and under messages to his Sunday school and other religious organizations. What life meant to him, and how he applied his own experience to meeting and solving problems, were put down only in reports of talks to his store family or appeared in brilliant flashes in Commencement speeches to young people at Williamson and elsewhere.

When he returned from the Republican Convention in 1912, and went home to rest, there was a hot spell. He could not "potter around" Lindenhurst—the expression is his own. He spent so much time reading that his son Rodman, to get him away from books, suggested that he write some advertising.

"I have not written advertising for so many years that I forget," he protested. "I have only used the blue pencil on it. I wouldn't know how or what to write."

Continuing his own account of what happened, Wanamaker said:

Rodman seemed so disappointed that after he left the room, I cut open an envelope and began to write on the inside. It was not long enough, although an envelope ought to be long enough for what a man has to say. I used three envelopes and gave the result to my son. The next morning I was surprised to see what I had written in a box in the corner of the store advertisement.

It is ten years since I wrote that first fatal editorial, and in that time I have certainly written 1,000 or more pieces that I tore up as not worth printing. When I got to writing these brief things I realized that the idea wasn't enough—it had to be pursued. Because it is my nature to keep after things that elude me, I guess, writing these editorials has always been great fun. Up to 1912 all I had ever written in my life were the four reports I had to get out annually when I was Postmaster-General.<sup>1</sup>

We have quoted from an interview given by Wanamaker in the last year of his life. Three years earlier, in 1919, one of the store editorials said:

In 1912, seven years ago, we wrote on the back of an envelope, at the request of the writer's son, the first of these daily editorials. Letters of responsiveness and thankfulness that have come back from the people have been like the old farmer's little candle lit in a public assembly in New England when they were debating about proclaiming a fast and he proposed a thanksgiving day. "That man who will learn of none but himself is sure to have a fool for his master." This was said by B. F. Our clumsy fingers have tried to send out messages. Thanks for the messages that have come back from our fellow-countrymen all over the United States.

The reception with which the store editorials met literally gave Wanamaker a new lease on life. He was encouraged to keep writing them. A new one had to be done each day. But each day was bound to bring a word of appreciation from some source. Wanamaker had been accustomed to receiving letters from people, thanking him for some stand he took or criticizing him for some stand he did not take. But the responses to the store editorials were unique in his experience. He touched heartstrings, and they responded. He made hosts of friends. He had found a pulpit unlike any that had ever been known before. The original intention had been to make the editorials call attention to the Wanamaker business. They were to be

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, February 7, 1922, reprinted in *Current Opinion*, March, 1922.

advertisements. But very soon Wanamaker found himself looked upon as a friend and philosopher, sharing the fruits of his experience with others; as a patriot, sounding the clarion call to duty; as an optimist, radiating a cheery good morning; and, above all, as an interpreter, commenting on human behavior and outlining currents of public opinion and tendencies of group action.

Wanamaker wrote more than five thousand editorials, never once, as far as we have been able to discover, repeating himself. Nearly four thousand of them were used in the daily advertisements of the Wanamaker stores.<sup>1</sup> He did not dictate these "pieces," as he called them. They were rarely written in business hours. Putting the daily editorial together was a recreation to enjoy after the day's work in his office, when he stayed late (which was frequently) or at home. Writing the editorials was often hardly more than assembling phrases and sentences that came to him in the course of the day, and which he had jotted down during business or social conversations, on the train or street, in his automobile, even in church. He had the habit of carrying papers and pamphlets, notebooks and unanswered letters, in all his pockets. Even his overcoat pockets bulged with them. On these the notes were recorded, and then he would piece them together, using a lead pencil when his fountain pen refused to work. The method was not new—we have found traces of it when he was still in his twenties. He was no respecter of places or persons when he got an idea. Wherever he was, whatever

<sup>1</sup> Since John Wanamaker's death, in the little box at the upper left-hand corner of the daily advertisement, the stores have continued to carry the editorials, under the caption, "From the writings of the Founder." Those that are republished do not contain, of course, the apt allusions to events of the day that often made a Wanamaker editorial peculiarly attention-arresting. But even with the elimination of the editorials that were written for the day, enough of permanent interest remains to last through years without repetition.

he was doing, down it went on an odd bit of paper. His diaries were written almost wholly in this way.

The process was not conducive to unity of thought. Study of Wanamaker's speeches and writings—also of the drafts of advertisements (in the form of announcements) that he occasionally made—indicate at times a discursiveness that impairs their effectiveness. Wanamaker knew this. He was able to read himself as keenly and as mercilessly as he read others. He had the gift—rare among men who attain high position—of occasionally laughing at himself. Once after listening to the J. W. C. I. cadets singing a popular song he went back to his office chuckling, and said to a friend: "Rambling, rambling, rambling all around, rambling up and down—why, that's me when I get started!"

In his speeches, however, it was only when one saw them in print afterward that the discursive quality was noticed. His magnetic personality, his bonhomie, his felicity of expression, and his epigrams cast a spell over his listeners. When he had set for himself a definite topic or a time limit—as was always the case at Bethany—there was no "rambling." He knew how to be clear, terse, forceful. The editorials of the last decade of his life gained immeasurably from the fact that they had to be short. At the age of seventy-five he learned a new technique, and became master of it. This severe daily discipline that he set for himself influenced his other writing and speaking. His Christmas cards, his messages to Bethany and the store family, his occasional speeches, his letters to friends, of the period from 1912 to 1922, possess literary merit of an unusual degree. No longer did one have to dig for the nuggets of pure gold in what Wanamaker said and wrote.<sup>1</sup>

The observations, the thoughts, the opinions, the inter-

<sup>1</sup> Two volumes of prayers—none over a page long—have been published. Their clarity and simple beauty demonstrate the power of expression attained by Wanamaker in the latter years of his life.

LINDENHURST  
WYNCOTE, P.O. PA.

Into our silent home  
the stillest ever — came  
quickly, your comforting  
message of remembrance,  
which helped us to bear  
the unutterable sorrow  
of our hearts.

Lindenhurst

August 23  
1920

John Wanamaker

WHEN MRS. WANAMAKER DIED

pretations of a man who had lived so long and so fully would be worth while, however expressed. But for conveying a message to others, form is as important as content. The success of Wanamaker as an interpreter rests more on the way he learned to put his thoughts in the store editorials than upon the long and rich background of experience that inspired them.<sup>1</sup>

He acquired the habit of brevity.<sup>2</sup> But there was no limitation in the range of the topics on which he commented. Like Terence, he could say, *Nihil humani alienum mihi puto*. He regarded nothing human as foreign to him. But he went farther. A sunrise or sunset, a phenomenon of nature, a physical law, the habits of birds and beasts, gave him a text as fruitful and significant as a trait of human nature and anything that human beings did. He was the interpreter of the world in which he lived; and in his comments on current events, on political happenings, and on business in general and his own business in particular, he delved deeply and deftly into the fundamentals of natural laws and human motives to drive home his point. For instance:

#### LAST MONDAY'S TERRIBLE, BEWILDERING FOG IS SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The city of London is used to such fogs, but they have not been common to Philadelphia. The hundreds of stalled auto cars; the crippled machines; the loss of time; the sadness of the accidents, of which there were hundreds (according to the newspapers) in and around Phila-

<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker never got to the place where he would not be corrected or make use of the information of others. Accuracy in what he wrote in the store editorials was as important to him as in his advertisements. To give one example, in his April 6, 1920, editorial he misquoted an old saw. A correspondent called his attention to it. He called for the editorial, corrected it with his own hand on the file, so that it would be right if ever used again.

<sup>2</sup> Could a truth be more concisely expressed than this: "Whatever the blessings of the war, a train of evils is let loose in a new order of suddenly-enriched men"?

I think I hear the sound  
of your voice in the kind  
message of remembrance  
you have sent me.

I care for it very much.  
This would be a poor world  
but for its rich friendships.

Yours John Wanamaker  
Christmas week 1921

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

delphia, are a signal to us that our parks and streets must be made safer, to say nothing of the running of the steam trains in every direction into the city, on which so many are dependent to be on time for their day's work.

There are other fogs, however, to be thought of also, some of them infinitely worse, inasmuch as they affect statesmanship in Washington, at Harrisburg and in the Councils of Philadelphia, where there is no lack of mentality, but the prejudices of party and of politics and personal interests that move to action, that make the burdens heavier where taxation has to raise the money.

There are still some fogs in storekeeping, which we are trying to clear up.

We are blessed with great days in the safety, cleanliness, and healthfulness of the big building where so many thousands of people come daily to enjoy the sights, and see each other and have the opportunities that the new displays of goods attract them to every day.

And:

AT GENEVA, IN SIGHT OF MONT  
BLANC, FORTY MILES DISTANT

we have often stood and watched the two rivers, the Arve and the Rhone, uniting in one stream and for a long distance each preserving its distinct color, one of gray and the other of blue, until far off they become so blended that each is lost in the other or the green ocean.

So is it in human character. Each individual will keep his or her distinctiveness until muddy books and muddy companions and careless habits destroy the beautiful gifts of life with which they sparkled when they started out.

Sometimes an anecdote, without comment, would tell the whole story:

WHERE DOES THE "KNOW HOW" COME FROM?

A traveling Englishman, stopping on the village green, gathered a crowd about him to see his simple juggling tricks and his trained dog. When he finished, a well-dressed man who looked like the parson, expressed astonishment that the dog could do so many things. He told the entertainer that he had labored with his dog for years to teach him to do tricks, but had never succeeded, and he begged to be told how it

could be done. The modest little man, with his box and clever dog, looked at the questioner querulously, and said, "Well, to teach a dog anything, you yourself must know more than the dog."

And shortly before his death he wrote this editorial:

SOME DAY NOT SO FAR DISTANT  
MY LITTLE PENCIL

will have written its last piece and be laid aside. I have read and searched and listened to wise men and made the best use I could in the little scraps I have written of everything that I thought might be useful to others, struggling like myself to make the best of life. The only wish I have is that I could have done all my work better.

These illustrations have been picked at random. It is not necessary to quote more. The last decade of Wanamaker's life was one of tremendous upheavals and readjustments in the political and business world and in the social life of the American people. His work as interpreter was not confined to the daily editorial for the store advertisement. He was constantly in demand at public functions, and he was besieged by requests for messages and interviews and letters about everything under the sun. "Will you not write for us an editorial like those that appear in the Wanamaker ad.?" was a frequent request through years.

It was significant that Wanamaker was the only merchant—and one of three business men—among the electors of the Hall of Fame, most of whom were educators, writers, and statesmen. To the choice of eminent Americans for the unique building of New York University he gave thoughtful attention; the files bear evidence of his study of candidates and the arguments of their proposers. We are sure that no elector was more conscientious or enlightened in casting his vote.

Wanamaker refused no invitation to speak when it was possible for him to go; and he managed somehow to answer

all his correspondents. To give others the benefit of his experience was a joy; and the appreciation and enthusiasm that greeted what he had to say at banquets and on public occasions was, as he put it, "my mandate to override the doctors' veto." He kept radiating the ripe wisdom of his years because he felt that he ought to speak and write and because it was "great fun."

It is manifest that the rôle of interpreter was a delightful one; and that it kept Wanamaker full of life and spirits. The store editorials and the talks that he gave in connection with his business and with the various religious and educational offices that he held contain not only Wanamaker's philosophy of life and his attitude toward history in the making, but also his ideas of business and his reminiscences of early days. In a very real sense they are his autobiography.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE FIRST YEARS OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

AMERICANS of John Wanamaker's generation, who had gone through the Civil War in their youth and had come to know Europe at the very beginning of united Germany and united Italy, had almost all either died or retired from active life when Europe went to war in 1914. Wanamaker was an exception. He was still vigorous, still in the public eye, and still able to do his full share in co-operating with war agencies and in helping to mold public opinion by writings and speeches. No elder American had a better background than he for observing, through all the period of united Germany, the working out of German political ideals and social customs. His frequent stays at Carlsbad and Prussian watering-places had made him realize that there was something radically wrong with the Austrian and German dynastic system. It puzzled him that they had lasted so long in countries where the education of the masses was a fetish. As early as 1898, in a political speech, he had said:

"Emperors and despots read their doom in the advancement of intelligence the world over. No man was born to be a slave. The dynasties of Europe, that have endured for centuries, totter on their foundations, and the time is not distant when titled aristocracy will cease to usurp the rights of honest people."

But when the time did come for the fulfillment of the prophecy, the prophet was bewildered. In common with virtually all Americans of his class and temperament, he could not bring himself to face the reality of war, which

he abhorred, in Europe, which he loved. He searched his mind for reasons for Germany's actions. They were not hard to find, old memories crowding on him and helping to confirm his opinion that Germany was being woefully misled and that the conduct of her armies was despicable. And yet, he respected and admired German culture, and he had more than once paid tribute to German efficiency, which he believed was due largely to the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to the commonwealth manifested by all classes of Germans. For France his affection was deep. But, like many another American, he was inclined to generalize upon, and draw wrong deductions from, the atmosphere and outward tendencies of the French. Withal, he had a keen appreciation of French thought as well as of French art. Quick-witted, never too serious in the form of his thought, lucid and clear-cut in his statements, and always strongly individualistic and daring in his mental attitude toward everything, he could understand the French. No retail merchant in America had ever been so strongly influenced by French precedents, and he alone had created a French atmosphere and carried French stocks in all kinds of goods.<sup>1</sup> England was a country that he loved almost as much as France and with which he never did as much business as he wanted to. It was incredible that French and British should be fighting Germans; that Austrians should have started the war; and that almost before the world knew it

<sup>1</sup>Wanamaker was the first American retail merchant to buy his goods directly and regularly from the French producers through his own offices in Paris; he was the first to receive comments on French openings in gowns and hats by cable and to publish a magazine of Paris styles. The statement of his carrying "stocks in all kinds of goods" is not an exaggeration. He taught his buyers to consider France as part of the home market, and to look to France for standard lines—not to meet competition or a demand, but to create a demand. His bookstore, for instance, imported books from France as a matter of course, although this was considered a startling innovation.

Germany had violated the neutrality of Belgium and was invading France with ruthless methods.

His first public utterances were on August 6. In response to a telegram from the *Chicago Examiner*, inviting him to be a member of a "world-wide committee" to bring to a quick conclusion the war, Wanamaker replied:

Horrible as it is, this war will not have been in vain if its very horrors and destruction bring about that long-wished-for everlasting peace, a time when nations shall not lift up swords against nations, neither shall they learn war any more. The churches and the whole civilized world should make this their prayer next Sunday and every day until the war ends.

The same day in his store editorial he quoted from Washington's Farewell Address, and approved of Wilson's neutrality proclamation, on the ground that "it is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." His reaction to the stupendous tragedy in Europe was that of the great bulk of his fellow-countrymen—relief at the thought that such a horror could not touch us. Therefore we should continue to "build up while other countries are tearing themselves down." Because we were living "under Washington's counsel," the United States could boast of being

the one nation that goes to bed at night unafraid and unanxious as to war. Thousands of miles lie between us and the carnage of the Old World, and without danger we are standing still looking off over sea and land—only with our eyes beholding the horror in that carnage.

From this it was but a step to the open indorsement, despite the criticism that was just beginning to make itself heard, of the President's policy. Before the end of August a Wanamaker editorial said:

What next for America? First of all, let us firmly resolve that nothing shall draw the United States into the wild war of the world. The

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President at Washington is at the helm, and irrespective of our ancestries, religion, or politics, the people, one and all, must stand solidly at his back to conserve peace abroad and good will at home.

A few weeks later came the next phase, which was but the reflection of the mental attitude of Americans as a whole, the demand that war stop. In his editorial of September 28, 1914, he said:

The war must, *must* MUST cease soon. How can any or all nations continue to conduct it unless they are able to turn buttons into gold pieces?

Some deny it now, for themselves and for their heroes, that Americans passed through stages of shock at the very beginning of the European war. The process was the same for a Roosevelt, a Wilson, and a Wanamaker as for "the man in the street."<sup>1</sup> Before it happened, reports of the impending calamity were declared ridiculous. There would be no war. When it came, it was hard to accept, even though a fact; and the first impulse was to call the peoples of the Old World crazy, and to thank God that we were not as they were. This reflection made Americans thankful that they were not in it; so they affirmed that they never could get in it. President Wilson's neutrality proclamation—at the time it was made—was universally approved, and there was a lot of talk about Washington's farewell advice. It was the horror of the business that struck most people. Few Americans who had traveled were without friends on both sides. And our blood was so mixed in this

<sup>1</sup> The record of public pronouncements speaks for itself. Private letters of leading men reveal even more strikingly the repugnance to the idea of war itself and the suspension of judgment as to the responsibility for it. For example, former President Taft wrote to Wanamaker from New Haven on November 25, 1914: "This war in Europe is dreadful, and I am trying to look forward to some useful results in all this débâcle that those beautiful countries of Europe now present. After they get through I think they will want peace for a long time, and they may look to general arbitration treaties with some favour."

country that it was difficult to find any circle in which there was not avowed championship of both groups of belligerents. It was not until Entente propaganda got in its work and the Germans in this country and on the high seas wantonly disregarded American feelings and American rights that the spectators in the far-off Western world began to be a unit in thumbs down to Germany.

As the war was to him a horror and a calamity, and as he did not immediately attribute the responsibility of it to one side alone, it was natural that John Wanamaker should think of the alleviation of human suffering and that he should enlist under the Red Cross banner, whose mission was to minister to all the victims of war alike.<sup>1</sup> Pioneer again, he had booths opened as official Red Cross stations, and donated advertising space to "a call to the Red Cross colors." The booths in the Philadelphia store were opened on September 7, 1914. The next day Miss Mabel Boardman, presiding over the opening of the Wanamaker booths in the New York store, declared:

"That Mr. Wanamaker should take the lead in this movement both in New York and Philadelphia is the greatest thing that could happen to us. All American cities will now follow his lead."

So appreciative was Miss Boardman of this first-minute support that she established and kept the Red Cross headquarters for New York City in the store where she had found her *ami de le première heure*.

But while there was no disposition as yet to condemn Germany unreservedly for precipitating the war, sympathy

<sup>1</sup> He made this clear in his instructions for the formation of Red Cross committees in the stores. His people were all Americans, of course, but they came from different European stocks, and he wanted the composite background of the United States represented. He said that since the Red Cross idea was neutral, there should be "a German, an Austrian, a Frenchman, a Belgian, and an Englishman selected from each store family to run the Red Cross work."

was universal for her first victim. The war had not been of Belgium's seeking and nothing that could come of it would be to her advantage. As the unwitting sufferers whose woes were being graphically presented in the daily press, their appeal for aid struck a peculiarly responsive chord. Wanamaker chartered a Norwegian steamship, and offered to transport free of charge food supplies sent by the citizens of Philadelphia. Within five days \$170,000 had been raised. When he learned that the *Thelma* could not carry all the food this money would buy, Wanamaker chartered a second ship. The *Thelma* sailed from Philadelphia on November 12 and the *Orn* on November 25. To load the first ship Wanamaker worked unrelentingly. Although he was not well and had long days at the store, he purchased the cargo himself, and had to attend the ceremony of seeing it sail.<sup>1</sup> A few days later he wrote:

I am so good-for-nothing, and sleeping comes so good, and I am too lazy even to hold a pen. I think I put any brains and strength I had into gathering 104,000 dollars in four days and in buying barrels and bags and loading them off on the *Thelma* and pushing her off last Wednesday or Thursday. My legs and head are still unrested.

The *Orn*, with the overflow, did not tax the charterer in the same way that the *Thelma* had done. For others as well as for Wanamaker the sailing of these two ships, arranged for and supervised by the men themselves and not by a shipping company, was a welcome outlet for the nervous energy that clamored to spend itself upon actual relief work. It was easy enough to give the dollars; it was harder to buy the kinds of food that would be most needed, to load the ships, and to get them off without delay.

But Wanamaker's work for Belgium did not stop at the

<sup>1</sup> After returning from the sailing of the *Thelma*, the Belgian Consul-General wrote to Wanamaker in his own hand: "My first thought goes to you in a spirit of deep gratitude for your great generosity, and of unbounded admiration for the masterly way in which, under your leadership, the whole work has been carried on. Belgium will never forget."

spectacular achievement that took only a few days. The files bear evidence to a continued interest (which was characteristic of the man) that lasted throughout the war. He thought that orphans might be brought over here, and then that whole families might be assisted to America. Following out this idea, he got into correspondence with various people and organizations. But he ran athwart of the immigration law, and Washington officials were adamant. Then he devised a plan for utilizing the skill of Belgian lace-workers (they were the first refugees) who had gone in hordes to France and England. It occurred to him that they might be gathered together and their industries started temporarily in certain centers of exile. He wrote to the Belgian Minister that if the government would follow out a plan like this and furnish the administrative personnel and the funds to start this work and keep it going he would underwrite it by taking all the lace they produced—not a part of it, but all of it, with no limit set on the amount.

Speaking at a Racquet Club rally, when the funds were being raised to put food on the ships he had chartered, Wanamaker in a moment of enthusiasm declared:

"We must save Belgium. We must stop the war. If there is no other way, let us ransom Belgium from Germany, even if we have to pay \$100,000,000,000."

The statement made a tremendous sensation, and some newspapers made a lot of it. It was regarded as wholly impracticable. Wanamaker regretted that the remark had been so featured and had attracted so much attention. The "high lights" of his talk had been the importance of Belgium's civilization and the duty of those who had plenty for themselves to respond generously to a nation's cry of need, and he threw out the idea of ransoming Belgium simply as an illustration of the length to which we should be prepared to go to stop the war. He did not like the

ridicule with which the suggestion was received; but it was difficult to back it up with fact or solid argument. It was a sore point with him for a long time. He alluded to it a year later in a business conference in which he said that he said "such outrageous things" and that he "often had such outrageous thoughts, as he had about Belgium." But in 1918 he told a friend that "the people who made so much fun of me when I said that we should stop the war, if it cost a hundred billion of dollars, will see now that I was not so crazy as they thought. When the actual cost of this World War is totaled up, it will be found to be a great deal more than a hundred billion dollars."

Another idea, equally startling but more practicable, aroused great interest in the first month of the war. We have seen how Wanamaker had been interested in the building up of an American merchant marine when he was Postmaster-General, and how, through mail subsidies, he had started to put the American flag back on the high seas.<sup>1</sup> It was always a source of keen regret—even of anger—that the American people remained indifferent to the merchant marine and that no leader at Washington took it up vigorously and staked his political life on the issue. He loved to go to New York by the Central Railroad, so that he could have the ferry ride. The sight of the ships of the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd lines, tied up at Hoboken, had intrigued him. On August 19, 1914, he wrote:

This is the opportune moment to get a merchant marine. As an American, I have been looking at those great ships, lying still in the Hoboken docks, with covetous eye. They are now offered for sale. Yesterday morning at nine o'clock there were fourteen of them, ready for service under the American flag.

Let the nation buy them. We couldn't make a better business invest-

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 316-19.

ment. They will form a commercial navy which will more than pay its way.

What is \$50,000,000 to the United States if it can create overnight such a large part of a merchant marine needed in the face of the dawning new era? We have spent the nation's wealth on its railroads; now let us make a beginning with ships.

The Wanamaker plan created a stir at Washington, especially as it was made concrete by the suggestion that these German ships could be purchased—or new ships built—out of the thirty per cent surplus of Postal Savings Banks. President Wilson declined to comment on Wanamaker's plea. He would not even commit himself to the idea of building a merchant marine with government aid.

When the international complications that might result from acquiring the German ships were brought to his attention Wanamaker said:

If there is any international law against our becoming the owners of the idle ships in the port of New York, the sooner it is known the better, that other plans may go forward—the work of building great ships at Cramp's, at New York, Camden, Newport News, and San Francisco. What if the ships will not pay? Neither does the Navy nor the War Department. Anything but tepid indefiniteness. It is absurd to say that the United States could not man the ships with American seamen.

Wanamaker's contention that the United States was a seafaring nation, with a future on the seas, goes back to 1873, when he helped George H. Stuart organize a mass meeting of representative merchants in Philadelphia to insist upon the importance of restoring the American flag to the high seas. At that time it had only recently disappeared, and it could have been brought back without much effort or sacrifice, had not the nation gone mad over railroads. What Wanamaker said in 1914 had been in his mind for over forty years. He had done what he could when he was Postmaster-General, and he came out in advocacy of

an American merchant marine at the time of the Spanish-American War and afterward. So much interest was aroused among business men by Wanamaker's renewal of the plea for an American merchant marine in 1914 that chambers of commerce organized special committees to report on how public opinion could be aroused. Wanamaker's mail was full of invitations to speak and requests for letters or statements. A large firm in Chicago put "an open letter to John Wanamaker" as an advertisement in four hundred newspapers, approving his stand and calling upon him to lead in the movement. The letter stated:

Now is certainly a most excellent time for the American people to find out how much they can do for themselves of the things they have been depending upon foreign workmen to do. We not only can, but must, find out now whether or not this nation can stand firm on its own two hundred million feet and make its own inventions to meet its own necessities and provide its own luxuries, and at the same time feed and clothe a great part of the rest of the world. We have the youth, energy, capital, will, the men and women to do these things. We can do everything that we are called upon to do, but deliver the goods, and we can't deliver the goods because we have no merchant marine. Let us get the ships first of all. It will be no trouble to put crews and cargoes aboard them. We must start ploughing the seas for an early harvest.

The disorganization of business that followed upon the declaration of war and the temporary cutting off of trade with Europe led many to predict a hard winter for the United States. This tendency to pessimism, although he knew it had some foundation, was fought by Wanamaker. He recognized the danger signals, but he thought it was a time for boldness. Speaking to the Rotary Club of Philadelphia on September 28, 1914, he said, "Optimism will boom trade." He pointed out that if only the American business men and bankers would have a little confidence and keep money in circulation hard times would not be badly felt because either the war would suddenly end, bringing

a boom after it, or its continuance and the withdrawal of most able-bodied men from industry and agriculture in the European countries would create an unprecedented demand for all that we could produce. He set the example by boldly placing large orders and announcing that the Wanamaker stores intended to do their full part, at whatever risk, in keeping mills and factories open. "The more goods the public co-operate with us in moving," he declared, "the longer we will put off hard times, and if we put them off a few months, they will never come at all."

When unemployment became serious in Philadelphia, his daughter, Mrs. Warburton, of the Emergency Aid Fund, asked his aid in putting an appeal for \$100,000 before the people. He gave up the whole Wanamaker page in the Philadelphia newspapers to second the Emergency Aid Fund's call upon Philadelphia for the entire sum in a single day. He wrote the appeal himself. The money was raised.

In the spring of 1915 it began to be realized that the war in Europe was going to last a long time and that it might, if prolonged indefinitely, upset the social fabric of Europe. This set Americans to thinking how the power of this country might make itself felt to end the war, not only for humanity's sake, but also because the continuance of the conflict might deplete Europe and bring about social disorders that would have their repercussion in America. Leading Americans organized what they called "The League to Enforce Peace," with William H. Taft as president and A. Lawrence Lowell as chairman of the Executive Committee. This committee contained a curious mixture of names, some of idealists, some of practical business men, and others of men distinguished for their realistic rôle in politics. Wanamaker was invited to the preliminary Philadelphia conference on June 17, by Taft, with the idea

that he might be willing to serve on the Executive Committee. A month previously an urgent invitation had come to join the group that was organizing the National Security League. His friendship for Taft, under ordinary circumstances, would have made him accept without delay the request to give his name to the League to Enforce Peace; while his great respect for Choate was an argument for going into the National Security League. But he could not bring himself to feel that it was wise to rush impulsively into either of these organizations. He did agree to be one of the signatories of a non-committal call to a mass meeting out of which grew the Philadelphia branch of the National Security League, and later he became its not very active chairman. But as late as October 6, 1915, we find Judge Parker writing to Wanamaker that he was "one of the small number from whom an expression of opinion regarding the proposals of our League has not yet been received," and urged him again to go on the roll of charter members and to send in any criticism that he "might care to make."

Wanamaker, like most Americans, was by this time full of resentment against the Germans and on the way to becoming a partisan. He struggled against the feeling, and tried honestly to put the broader goal of universal peace, speedily obtained, above the fortunes of any single nation. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, however, had been a rude awakening. When the first news came he said to an *Evening Journal* man:

"It is partly my funeral, because three of my business family were on board the ship. I had the privilege of a quiet hour with the Emperor of Germany, and I do not believe that he is responsible for this catastrophe that involves the United States. Whoever are responsible for the conduct of the war must have lost their heads. Please

spare me from talking further. The only one to speak now is the President of the United States. God help him."

Consumed with anxiety over the fate of his buyers, he sent messages to Ambassador Page, through the State Department, and cabled his grandson and namesake, who was then in the London office, to go immediately to Queens-town. He sat up all night in anguish waiting for news, and told the reporters:

"You gentlemen think it hard to be a reporter, but it is harder sometimes to be an employer. Imagine how I feel over this because if I had not sent Mr. Tesson to Europe he would not have been on the *Lusitania*, and if he had not been there Mrs. Tesson would not have been, either."

Tesson was head of the shoe department in the New York store and he was *en route* to Russia to arrange for delivery on a boot contract, one of the largest that had been given out. Concerning that contract Wanamaker never spoke again. He lost all interest in it. The horror of the *Lusitania* sinking entered his soul. He made an address at the funeral of Mr. and Mrs. Tesson which gave offense to "hyphenates."<sup>1</sup> To his store family he proposed the following resolution, which was adopted and telegraphed to Washington:

WHEREAS, In view of the assault upon the *Lusitania* and the sinking of a passenger ship making a peaceful voyage, carrying among others some hundreds of American citizens—men, women and children, traveling on their private and peaceful business, without a moment's warning, who were sent to their death. And,

WHEREAS, In a recent note forwarded to the German Empire by the President of the United States, he advised Germany that in such an

<sup>1</sup> German sympathizers wrote indignant letters, closing their accounts. Before the *Lusitania* tragedy, Wanamaker used to answer some of these letters. After he realized that there were men and women in the United States who justified that act, he paid no attention to letters of "hyphenates." He once said that if he were dependent upon doing business with this type of person, he would close his stores.

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event the United States would hold the German Empire to a strict accountability,—

RESOLVED, That we American citizens, whether native or foreign born, and without regard to political party, race, creed, or religion, do declare ourselves, our persons, and our fortunes in a pledge to support the President of the United States in any decision or action he may take in the promises to uphold the honor of our country in defense of and for the protection of the lives of all or any of our fellow-citizens and hereto we apply our signatures.

By midsummer he had come to the point in his thinking where he was ready to say:

Peace talk is mostly fol-de-rol at the present moment. There can be no peace until capable, well-informed, and thoroughly well-balanced men look over all the questions and rights and wrongs, and play the game fairly to just conclusions that should be plainly proclaimed to all nations. This is a time for war by wise men's minds and true men's hearts without guns and submarines. Business statesmanship as well as patriotism is the hourly call just now.

This led to an effort on the part of the New York *American* to commit him to pronounce between intervention in the European war and summoning a council of neutrals to define the scope of neutral rights and provide for enforcing them. Wanamaker was not ready to say what he thought about this, but he shifted his reply to a question:

Are we callous and careless enough to sit still and see this war go on, because some of us are getting money from munitions made in this country, or are we big enough, brave enough, and humane enough to pledge our wealth and strength, if need be, all our money, to save the world from years of continuous bloodshed?

Three weeks later, when Henry Ford issued his famous plea for education as the means of destroying "the parasites that breed war," Wanamaker telegraphed him on August 23, 1915:

Delighted to read your speech to the public on financing peace instead

of war in to-day's *Herald*. I have the same disposition to do anything and spend everything if thereby the millions of men that are sinking into graves from lust of bloodshed can be stopped. Your horse sense turned into statesmanship will avail more than all the money you and others can scrape together. Come along and have a night with Edison at my country home to talk things over.

Ford accepted the invitation with alacrity. He gave out to the press the Wanamaker invitation and declared that he hoped that it would lead to getting Edison's co-operation in constructive peace. To the Detroit reporters he said:

"I am highly pleased, of course, with Mr. Wanamaker's indorsement of my views as to peace. I cannot forecast what will occur at the meeting, but I believe that in the united efforts of certain citizens working actively in various parts of the United States toward the common end of peace, a great deal will be accomplished."

Nothing came of the Wanamaker-Edison-Ford "peace conference," in so far as two members of the trio were concerned. Edison did not see what could be done by private initiative to bring about peace; nor did Wanamaker. The episode ended in newspaper gossip. But when a second winter in the trenches seemed inevitable, Henry Ford yielded to a generous impulse and decided to go ahead. Badly advised, he announced in November his peace-ship project. We must remember that Ford had come into national prominence only the year before through his minimum-wage pronouncement, which he put into action in his own factories. He was as yet inexperienced in the ways of the world. When he gave out a statement concerning the peace ship, with the list of those invited to go to Europe to stop the war, a number of the prominent men on the list were prompt in repudiating or ridiculing the Ford plan. They said they would never dream of accepting the invita-

tion and resented the publication of their names. They must have been annoyed by the letters and telegrams and comments of their friends. Wanamaker received hundreds of messages, a few urging him to go, but most of them condemning the scheme. Because of the previous invitation he had given to Ford and Edison to talk about peace, there were some who jumped to the conclusion that the Ford peace ship was the result of Wanamaker's encouragement of Ford's August pronouncement.<sup>1</sup>

Indirectly, probably, it was; but Wanamaker had not been informed of the actual plan before his name was linked with it, and from the first moment he did not entertain the idea of going on what he believed would be a wild-goose chase. His papers of this period show that he was beginning to feel that any intervention from America would be regarded as propaganda to help Germany against the Entente Powers. But his relations with Ford had always been friendly, and he held Ford in great esteem. Although he believed in preparedness, while Ford was more or less of a pacifist, Wanamaker understood and respected—even approved—the general attitude of Ford toward peace. The peace-ship project, and the use of his name in connection with it, did not please him. But he refused to repudiate Ford or ridicule the project. His sense of loyalty forbade that. He told the press that he was willing to do anything to help Ford to end the war. At the same time he telephoned Ford that he doubted the wisdom of the plan, but wanted to talk it over fully. So he invited Ford to come

<sup>1</sup> Press comments of the time bear out this statement. It is also evident from a great number of letters, some written by intelligent people, who linked together the September conference with Ford's November plan. Cranks from all over the country wrote to Wanamaker begging him to take them along on the peace ship and numerating their qualifications for collaborating and putting an end to the war. That Wanamaker read some of these letters—and that he kept his temper in reading them—is evidenced by penciled notes, written in a kindly vein. A number of those who wanted to go on the peace ship were friends or acquaintances.

to Philadelphia. The account of the visit we have in Wanamaker's own words:

Mr. Henry Ford came from Washington with his Secretary and had luncheon with me.

The two hours' conversation was simply going over the statement I made over the phone, when he asked me to go with his party, which he perfectly understood at the time and was misreported in some of the newspapers, as he confirmed what I said, which was that I would go to the end of the world with him if I could help to stop the war.

There was an "if" in it, and the "if" was the further words said to him at that time, that I must know who the party was that he was making up and what the plans were to accomplish definite results. He confirmed exactly what I had said and stated to me his idea and his belief, urging me to go with him.

I tried to set before him the difficulties of his position and the time slipped away, when he had to meet an engagement in New York, and I agreed to another interview with him, or his Secretary, or both of them, at his convenience.

John Wanamaker did not go with Henry Ford to Europe. Even before the end of 1915 he had begun to feel that our intervention on the side of the Entente Powers might prove to be the way out. At any rate, he had been too long in business, and his whole life had been too much the story of building solid foundations and looking ahead, for him not to feel that we were drifting along foolishly when the Old World was afire. In August, in approving the general tenor of Ford's statement, he had been careful to write a letter to the New York *Herald*, pointing out that his whole life had been a lesson in preparedness and that he hoped none of his friends would believe that he indorsed policies harmful to the interests of national defense. He had been one of the Philadelphians to sign the call for the National Defense Conference in July, 1915, and in numerous talks to his store people he spoke of preparedness as a duty.

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And he was looking ahead to the competition for markets that would result from the war. In a business conference on October 6, 1915, he said:

"Japan is going to be the hardest nation to overcome. Those people can imitate anything. We are having hundreds of things made in Japan for us. Now I suppose every little workshop in Germany is standing just as it did before the war. They can't sell goods to England; England won't have them. They can't sell them to France; they will expect to sell them to South America and the United States. You say they haven't any money. Well, money is a commodity like everything else. They will come over here and there will be plenty of money to lend them. It will be like giving them a stiletto to stick into our business."

The second winter of the war brought to Wanamaker the desire to go to England and France. He wanted to see how things were going, and to talk with old friends. Two years and a half had elapsed since his last visit. But business held him as closely as ever, and he was not displeased that it did. He wrote almost gleefully that there were questions that only he could settle, and that while his son Rodman was in New York he had to be in Philadelphia. He recorded:

No man of seventy-seven can know that he is indispensable and at the same time know that he is old. Of course every man can be replaced, and things would go on without me; but as long as God is using a man, as long as a man serves, he isn't on the shelf. I dare not think at present of putting the ocean between myself and the many critical things about the business that arise each week. I must keep touch, too, with the position our variable President takes regarding the war.

Business was increasing by leaps and bounds with the unparalleled prosperity that had come about just as the merchant with vision had prophesied when he pleaded for opti-

mism shortly after the war opened. But as factories turned to producing war materials, it became harder and more expensive to get good and sufficient merchandise. The stocks from Europe, which the Wanamaker stores had always featured, were uncertain in quality and quantity and especially in time of delivery. His diary shows how Wanamaker had begun to be annoyed about the slowness of steamer communication and the censorship. We find entries such as:

3-24. Sometimes a week comes along without any letters from Europe. I notice that we seldom nowadays have more than one mail steamer leaving each week.

4-14. I have not many letters from Europe and all of them are censored and cut open and sometimes words cut out and some of them delayed three weeks. Letters come cut up and stamped censored. Important mail is afloat somewhere.

While thousands who had never bought at Wanamaker's before were flocking in and demanding the best grades of everything, it became increasingly difficult to keep up with the demands, and by offering high wages factories were beginning to lure men and women from mercantile pursuits. From the April, 1916, diary we take:

To think that we are in the twenty-fifth year of our boys' soldiering at the store and that the country is only now falling into line.

I have been all alone for two weeks; my people are at Green Briar, and return Sunday night next. It is hard to cross ferries and go to New York, and many things I want to do are out of all possibilities when I have to do them alone. I can only struggle and limp along. We are very busy in the two stores. We are all on the jump all the time. I am quite well and at work sixteen hours almost every day. But I have my reward and my inspiration. The entire store glows with life and beauty.

Last night I went to the country and stopped all night and was refreshed by it. No leaves are out as yet on the trees, but there are robins and blackbirds hopping about.

Good Friday—Just now the President's visit to Congress yesterday is absorbing the public thought and some fears are expressed of probable

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war. I do not believe we shall rush into war. The people of America are patient and loath to enter upon war paths. They will not do so even now unless Congress forces the President to instant action. I am still hopeful that peace will come without bloodshed on American soil or on U. S. ships. But who can tell? I am very well, very busy, very hopeful of continuing good times.

When President Wilson called out the National Guard for service on the Mexican border, more than a hundred employees in the Philadelphia store and eighty from the New York store went with their regiments. Wanamaker announced that they would all receive full salaries during their absence; and on April 8, 1916, the Red, White and Blue Cross was incorporated for war service. It was an organization of the store family, and he accepted the active presidency. Every employee was a member; and this organization, fourteen thousand strong, as set forth in the charter, was formed "for the purpose of education and preparation for, and co-operative service in, public emergency." On the night of the incorporation, speaking to his Philadelphia store family, the president of the Red, White and Blue Cross said:

"God forbid that ever another war should come in this country or with any other country, but if it ever does, no American, old or young, from South or North, will be slow to answer the call of the colors which are so dear to us all. I believe in national preparedness."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The stenographic notes of a meeting of the Property Committee of the Philadelphia Board of Education, which met at the N. E. Manual Training School on June 28, 1916, to discuss a new building, show that John Wanamaker upheld Dr. Morrison's plea that the building make adequate provision for the physical training of every student. Commenting on the principal's desire for an armory for drills, Wanamaker said: "We are not going to be a military nation, but we are going to be prepared as we haven't been for fifteen years. I blame both Taft and Roosevelt, with all the knowledge they had of foreign countries, through our consuls, that they didn't know what was going on, instead of leaving it until it is hard work to get ready. The gymnasium floor should be large enough to meet the needs of the future. With all this ground I should certainly make here a drill room for 2,000 young men."

When President Wilson spoke strongly to Germany and when he seemed as if he were going to abandon the course of temporizing, he had no more vigorous and loyal supporter than John Wanamaker. There had been a long silence on the subject of the war in the store editorials until Wilson sent an ultimatum to Germany threatening the rupture of diplomatic relations if merchant ships continued to be sunk. Over his signature Wanamaker published on April 20, 1916:

Rallying to the colors! Old Glory yesterday, despite wind and weather, reigned supreme. Everywhere the boys big and little sang, "We are coming, Father Wilson, on your first call one hundred thousand strong, and millions more to follow when needed." Our young fellows flock to the flag, pledged to carry it to victory, and for the third time the writer accepts the privilege to declare himself ready personally to do military duty in office or camp.

The following day, Wanamaker called attention to the fact that a year before he had printed an appeal to the business men of the nation "to stand squarely behind the President."

It seemed then a conscientious duty. To-day it is even more a plain duty. On this Good Friday, the day of the Cross of a lonely man in Jerusalem, let us lay off our politics and sectarianism and think of the burdened man at Washington, chosen by the votes of the people to be their President for four years, and give to him due and unqualified support, and concentrate all our strength to help him. These are solemn days for the nation and doubly solemn for the Chief Executive. Let it not be said by the President that the men who could have helped failed him when he needed them most.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1916

THE failure of Woodrow Wilson to follow up his representation to Germany by energetic measures, and to lead in preparing the nation for what might come, was a bitter disappointment to many Americans who were willing to "stand by the President." The German reply to the American ultimatum, provoked by the torpedoing of the *Sussex*, published at the beginning of May, did not satisfy Americans of the Wanamaker type. Wilson's answer to it was to them an indication that his leadership could no longer be counted upon. When asked if he was willing to go as a delegate to the Republican Convention, Wanamaker consented.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of June, 1916, he recorded:

Here I am again elected to go to Chicago to help in choosing a President. I go on the 4th—to stop there for a week at least. It is not a pleasurable employment for me to have.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the first administration of Woodrow Wilson no prominent Republican had supported him more loyally than John Wanamaker, who always tried to understand him and who believed it the duty of the citizen to stand by the President, irrespective of party. From the time he was an instructor at Bryn Mawr, Wilson had been a customer on the books of the Wanamaker store, and when he was a college professor he had more than one occasion to appreciate the consideration of John Wanamaker. Wanamaker was head of the committee that escorted Governor Wilson to lay the corner stone of the Y. M. C. A. building at Atlantic City in 1912. Although he had worked so hard for the re-election of Taft, Wanamaker accepted the Democratic administration "like a good sport." He gave material aid to the new President in his first year by his "Don't Be Blue" speech at the Union League on January 1, 1914, and by his ringing support of Wilson's Mexican policy at the dedication of the Manufacturers' Club on March 23 of the same year. On May 22, 1914, before the war clouds broke in Europe, he asked the Pennsylvania Jewelers' Association Convention to give President Wilson their sympathetic understanding and assurance of loyal encouragement in his difficult tasks.

And after he got there, he wrote on the third day of the convention:

These lead-pencil notes are made on the Lake Shore as I sit in my auto in the rain in front of the Auditorium waiting for a man to come to me in preference to going into the surging crowds of men-midwives engaged in bringing into the world a new President for the nation. Whatever candidate is chosen here is likely to be that. I arrived on Monday at 3 o'clock. We are settled at the Hotel Virginia, not much of a hotel, but a quiet comfortable apartment house. All the hotels are mobbed by the delegates and the thousands of hangers-on who came to work for their favorite candidate in the hope of favors to come.

Chicago looks bigger than ever and it is more and more wonderful in its up-and-at-it-ness. Its Parks and Boulevards are splendid. They must have big men here to do such marvelous things.

It looks as if it will be Saturday night before we can get through, though the meeting for organization is to be to-morrow. There is much excitement, as Roosevelt is again to the fore and a serious obstacle he is to harmony. Justice Hughes could be easily nominated if he would declare himself a candidate. All along he has declined to allow anyone to speak for him or to say that he is a candidate.

As I write the rain is coming down in sheets and the day is cold and dreary.

That all his time was not given to the convention and all his admiration to the physical aspect of Chicago is indicated by what Wanamaker put down on June 8:

Our stores are not as smart as they think themselves to be. The Field stores are marvels in their many superiorities. They are lavish in spaces, fixtures, and magnitude of stocks. We can learn much if my eyes serve me rightly as I looked them over for a few hours this morning.

We could fill pages with comments of this nature, extending over half a century, to demonstrate the open-mindedness of John Wanamaker and his everlasting eagerness to learn. He gave everybody his due—in his diary at least—and he was ungrudging in his praise of other cities than Philadelphia and New York and of other stores than his

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own. He was constantly saying that we lived to learn, and that there was no possibility of learning if we were satisfied with our own achievements. Once to his Bible class he put this thought forcefully, "God is the only one who can safely look at His work and call it good; it is dangerous for anybody else to try that!"

His lack of sympathy with politicians was largely due to their failure to pay attention to the successes, the abilities, the outstanding qualities of other men. Wanamaker had found that the successful merchant only remained so by a constant study of what others were doing in merchandising. Political life, on the other hand, tended to give the man in office so great an esteem of himself that he discounted—or even ignored—competitors. Roosevelt had long been that way; Wilson was displaying the same symptoms. "In the hot box of the convention day and night, endeavoring to cool off the Progressives and pull out the Roosevelt stops," to use Wanamaker's own language, the veteran Philadelphian, in the caucus of the Pennsylvania delegation and in contact with other party leaders, appealed for a sane viewpoint and the putting of party interests above factional fights. He sympathized with the reluctance of Hughes, but insisted that it was his duty to run for the nomination. Against the passionate arguments of many of his friends, Wanamaker stood for Hughes in 1916 as he had stood for Taft in 1912. Not anticipating a Progressive bolt this time, he felt that the country would sweep Hughes into office as a protest against the alternative blowing hot and cold of Wilson in his attitude toward the European war.

After returning from the convention he made a statement to the press in which he expressed his satisfaction at the nomination of Justice Hughes, which he had advocated from the first.

To my personal knowledge every effort was made honestly and conscientiously to bring together the good men who saw no reason for longer separation when an imminent crisis was facing the country.

I never saw so many tall, breezy, six-footed Westerners and Southerners together. They were the sons of wars, brave defenders and at their best, even though gray headed, in their determination to conserve the results for which they have fought. They were men of high candle power, creating the light of conscience, honor, and duty for these perilous times. The manifest purpose was to stand together for one country, one Constitution, one flag, and a wholesome and gigantic national growth of our ever-increasing country, and the full establishment of the principles of human rights and the powers of the government. Anything short of this would have failed to reach the harmony that prevailed. At every point the American Flag unfurled itself as worthy of honor by self-respecting men, desiring peace with all the earth, and yet resolute in the determination that the flag should be respected by nations as well as men.

I was glad to be called upon by Indiana to present the name of Charles W. Fairbanks, for Vice-President, so well known by his long, useful life, and so well proven as the adviser of Presidents of the past generation, that his work was recognized by the 863 votes which made him the running mate on the ticket that has met with almost universal approbation since it was named.

As the summer went on and the campaign began to gather momentum Wanamaker was informed that Hughes was not making a favorable impression on the country. The campaign was not being well managed by the Republicans, who underestimated the strength of Wilson's position as the man who had kept the country out of the war. Wanamaker was told that the unthinking masses were inclined also to attribute the general prosperity that came from the war orders of the Entente Powers to the success of the Democratic administration. This report, which he knew had been carefully prepared for him by able men, thoroughly aroused Wanamaker. He accepted the invitation to become one of the fifty members of the National Council on August 23, and attended the meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Republican National Committee a week later. Wana-

maker was far from satisfied with what was being done, and was alarmed at the optimism expressed to him at campaign headquarters. He thought that the confidence of the National Committeemen was not justified, and he decided to do what he could to arouse the country.<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker had seen on the very evening of this committee meeting a full-page advertisement in *Collier's Weekly*. It was headed, "Why Business Men Will Vote for Wilson." There was a picture of "President Wilson signing the Federal Reserve Act—the law that abolished panics," and underneath this caption was the statement: "Our national wealth has increased \$41,000,000,000 in two years. This is not due to war. What did it?"

The use of such arguments angered him. He had now come to believe that the Wilson policy of watchful waiting, transferred from Mexico to Europe, was shameful and that the repudiation of Wilson was needed "to rehabilitate the United States in the eyes of the world and to restore

<sup>1</sup> In the 1920 campaign Harding wrote to Wanamaker from Marion, asking his advice about the conduct of the campaign. In his answer, dated September 16, 1920, Wanamaker said: "The last election was lost not by the efficiency of the Democratic Committee, but by the inefficiency of the Republican Committee, which was bone sure that Hughes would be elected." Wanamaker's 1916 diary and the penciled notes he made as *aides-mémoire* for conversations with the National Committee prove that this statement was not hindsight. On August 30, 1916, he figured out that, subtracting Sundays, there were left "52 working days to November 1, requiring 24 hour days of Herculean energy and unceasing labor." He believed that Wilson was "meddling with labor to its manifest hurt," and that during the administration he had shown a "faculty for blundership instead of leadership, from the desertion of Belgium through the failure to seize the *Lusitania* opportunity right on to the Mexico zigzags." He wanted the party to promise to "repeal the income tax of all women until suffrage was granted." He thought that the Republican party should adopt such slogans as "peace by brains without buncombe" and "practical protection to producers promises permanent prosperity." He told the committee that they had to "capture New Jersey at any cost" and to "get a Hughes grip on a forceful newspaper in all most important cities to do as good work for Hughes as the *New York World* was doing against him." Above all he begged the committee to "stop sending out milk-and-water stuff," and "to instruct the campaigners to read-just speeches so that the basis of attack would not be against Woodrow Wilson personally, but would contain clear-cut stuff of what Wilson could have done by prompt action."

American self-respect and security." The idea of aiding the Hughes campaign by counter-advertising on a large scale came to him. On October 6, the stenographic notes of a business conference with his executives in the Philadelphia store show that he said:

I told some of the members of the National Committee yesterday that we were on the eve of digging a hole deeper than the trenches if Wilson is re-elected, because it will mean going on with the present tariff. The Democratic party is trying to show in its advertising that the prosperity has come through Wilson. The present prosperity is of a transient nature. It is simply an incident of the World War. Without the war to save us, we should have had a panic worse than the Grover Cleveland panic. It is perfectly nonsensical for the Democrats always to refer to the manufacturers as the "bloated aristocracy." You can't get prosperity unless people work. Their labor creates goods and thereby purchasing power. Low prices mean nothing if we do not have good wages. I believe that we—the four of us here—could write an editorial and publish it as an advertisement, and begin it just as I began this statement.

When Wanamaker went to work on his own suggestion, he found that his answer to the Democrats developed into twelve full-page advertisements, which he published in a supplement to the Philadelphia *Evening Telegraph* on October 23. The next day they were reprinted, at John Wanamaker's expense, in fifty of the leading papers of the United States. Proofs of the advertisements, which were profusely illustrated, were sent to delegates of the Chicago Convention, members of the National Committee, and state chairmen. Wanamaker offered to send paper matrices of the set to any newspaper in the United States that asked for them. In the last week of October telegrams were received by the hundred from all over the country. Western newspapers were especially interested, and some state committees saw that the Wanamaker advertisements were inserted in every paper in their state. It was an achievement in

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political advertising unique in the annals of the United States.

The most striking of the Wanamaker advertisements were those that pilloried the foreign policy of the Democratic party. One of these had a picture of the Capitol at the top and the White House at the bottom. A sentence stood out in bold type: "Held as a great power but a short while ago, America to-day faces the indifference or scorn of many of the nations that once gave her merited homage." Another, headed by snapshots of the Panama Canal, declared that Hughes was "first in war, fearless, and first in peace with honor." It states that the basis of America's power to serve humanity after the war "will depend chiefly upon her own prosperity," and warned against an influx of Japanese goods. The crescendo reached its height in the twelfth advertisement. At the top was an American flag, headed "Old Glory," and followed by the statement that the flag

has always stood, and will ever stand, for a Nation not "too proud to fight"—a Nation loving peace, loving justice, loving harmony and amity with all mankind, yet insisting courageously, unflinchingly, with unvarying determination that the rights of mankind, symbolized by the sacred folds of the Stars and Stripes, shall not be sacrificed or downtrodden by any Nation, and that the person and property of every American shall be inviolate, wherever found, in every part of the world.

The effect of the advertisements was felt in critical and strategic regions, and up to the last day of the campaign requests kept pouring in for the matrices. On October 30 Will H. Hays, who was then chairman of the Indiana State Committee, wrote Wanamaker congratulating him upon the services he was rendering the party in the Middle West and telling him how much good the advertisements were doing in Indiana and neighboring states. In answer to a similar letter from Nicholas Murray Butler, Wanamaker told the president of Columbia University that he had urged

advertisements of this kind upon the committee "many weeks ago. I believe we could have started a prairie fire for Hughes if only they had understood the practical nature of such work."

But there was comment of another character just as there had been the year before when he had refused to go on Ford's peace ship and when he had denounced the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Letters came in from irate "Little Americans" and from "hyphenates" announcing the intention of giving up buying at his stores. When he happened to see these letters he answered them. His reply to a rich German-American who lived at the Biltmore Hotel is a classic. On November 4, 1916, he wrote:

I have your esteemed letter of November 3, and I do not express my regret that you are taking your name from our books. I sell furniture and other things, but I do not sell my birthright of acting as my conscience dictates, irrespective of selling goods. The same liberty that you take to yourself, I have always taken for myself, and I regret that we cannot think of larger questions than the selling and buying of goods when the good or ill of one hundred millions of people is at stake.

So alarmed were the Democrats at the effect of the advertising that two days before the election a personal attack on Wanamaker was published as a political advertisement in New England and in the Middle West. Leading Democratic newspapers of Boston and Chicago carried it. In New York it slipped only into the *American*, but inadvertently, because it was noticed and withdrawn before the city edition went to press.<sup>1</sup> The advertisement charged that the man who was paying for the series of page Republican

<sup>1</sup> It had been handed in late Saturday night, and had been passed by mistake. The *American* in a double-column editorial called the attack one of the "contemptible roorbacks that disgraced the last hours of the presidential campaign" and declared that "John Wanamaker shares with perhaps not more than a dozen others the rightful reputation of being one of America's greatest citizens."

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advertisements was John Wanamaker, and that he did it because:

From 1898 to 1910 the House of Wanamaker withheld thousands of dollars in customs revenue. Twelve years of deception in connection with shipments from the Wanamaker Paris office! On March 3, 1913, the day before President Wilson took office, John Wanamaker paid the Government \$100,000 in settlement. Extreme haste marked the compromise, Secretary MacVeagh and Collector Loeb exerting extraordinary efforts to close and hide the case. But Secretary McAdoo reopened the case. On June 16, 1914, Wanamaker confessed again and paid over another \$100,000. In addition, Secretary McAdoo cleaned out the customs service at Philadelphia, putting trusted men on guard.

With his characteristic energy, despite the fact that the advertisement had been "withdrawn without any suggestion of Mr. Wanamaker or his friends," Wanamaker published over his signature a refutation of the charges. He declared that "some one apparently having access to the government offices at Washington made up a story in the interest of the Democratic party, intending to smirch an unblemished record of over half a century as a merchant." He went on to show how Wanamaker packages "went through the Custom House in the regular way and charges were paid whenever assessed," and that it was a new interpretation of the law regarding sample packages that made it necessary for the house of Wanamaker, in common with all other importers, to pay an assessment for back dues on sample packages. In conclusion he declared: "I am willing to establish these facts in any court by books, witnesses, and the Custom House brokers who paid the duties when the goods were passed, and, failing to do so, I will forfeit \$100,000 to be distributed to the hospitals and charities of New York and Philadelphia."

In the meantime Wanamaker conceived the idea of having a group of Republicans invite Roosevelt to make a key-

note campaign speech for Hughes in the last week of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker sent the following telegram on October 24, 1916:

DEAR COLONEL ROOSEVELT: There is still much to be done to make sure the election of Mr. Hughes. To some of your old friends in the West, whose signatures, representing many others of like mind, have been given to the accompanying telegraphic request, it seems as though you might crown your splendid work for Mr. Hughes by the soul cry of a true patriot from Cooper Union Friday night, Nov. 3rd, awakening the people to the crisis of the hour, like unto the speech of Abraham Lincoln, delivered on the same spot, which roused the people of the United States to put their seal upon him for the Presidency. The fight is becoming more tense daily and next Friday would be the psychological moment for your supreme effort for Hughes and the Republican and Progressive parties, for which every loyal American will rise up and call you blessed. Please wire. Your friend,

JOHN WANAMAKER.

From Toledo on October 27 Roosevelt answered:

It gives me great pleasure to accept your more than courteous invitation, and in accordance with your suggestion I appoint next Friday night November 3rd for the speech. Believe me, I appreciate your message and I desire to express through you my acknowledgment to your associates in the invitation.

The Cooper Union meeting, on November 3, 1916, sealed the return of Theodore Roosevelt to the Republican party.

<sup>1</sup> He telegraphed thirty prominent Republican business men, among them Shedd and Rosenwald of Chicago and others who had been mild Bull Moosers in 1912. All but two accepted. Choate asked for the text of the letter to Roosevelt, and then wired that he could not sign. Robert T. Lincoln said that there were "circumstances that made it impossible for him to join in the invitation."

That it was Wanamaker's intention to use the Cooper Union meeting for a great pre-election "moral awakening" is evident from a memorandum to the National Committee in which he suggested "services in all the churches in the United States on the Sunday following the Cooper Union meeting to adopt resolutions indorsing Mr. Hughes." He had compiled a list of 225,486 churches to whose pastors he thought a night letter should be sent immediately after the Cooper Union meeting. It was to be an appeal for prayer on Sunday "that the people might hear the voice of Lincoln calling upon a united country to fulfill her high destiny." Such a telegram might have turned the election.

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The flower of Republicanism in the East was gathered there, Progressives mingling once more with the Old Guard. Using the desk and chair that Lincoln had used in 1861, John Wanamaker presided. In introducing the prodigal son, Wanamaker reminded the audience that Theodore Roosevelt, by the will of the American people, had occupied Lincoln's high place as head of the American Republic, and that it was fitting for Roosevelt to sound the battle note for the nation and the party on the eve of the election. He said:

"This old Cooper Union, where we are meeting, has been a sanctuary since Abraham Lincoln, with prophetic vision, made the speech that has become immortal. That speech roused the nation. Republican doctrines and deeds rebuilt the nation in spite of the effort of Democratic doctrines and deeds to break it down. We refused then as we refuse now to take any middle ground or to trust to the don't care Democrats. We have assembled as old soldiers, old citizens, and old patriots in a national camp fire previous to going into next week's battle. Abraham Lincoln is not dead. His spirit goes marching on. He speaks to the sons of the patriots of 1861 now gathered here that they may take on a new impulse of patriotism for his sake and guard the country for which he perished. It is our conviction that no other presidential campaign in the history of the United States has presented graver issues or more far-reaching problems than does this. Not only is the domestic welfare of the nation profoundly to be affected by the result, but the honor and the very safety of the Republic are at stake."

The next evening, at Wilmington, Wanamaker delivered his final speech as a political campaigner. He denounced the Democratic slogan, "Peace and Prosperity," as a "misleading advertisement, which the Democrats expect to pour,

like soothing syrup, down the throats of the American people to quiet any inquiry into the future. It is an affront and an insult to the intelligence and conscience of our citizenship. It is like unto Nero fiddling while Rome was burning." What he thought of the transcendent issue, which he believed to be America's place in the world, can best be described in his peroration:

"Interpreted pictorially this slogan of peace and prosperity means and says to the rest of mankind that Uncle Sam has grown to be a fat, pudgy, happy gentleman, with a big paunch, a small head, and a smaller conscience. He is sitting in his easy chair, a big dinner in his stomach, a cigar in his mouth, about to fall asleep. Outside his home, with the din and lamentations of struggle easily heard through the open window, his neighbors are in sore conflict and distress. He turns his head. He looks. He sees. He closes his eyes. He is too proud to fight. He is too fat to care. He is too contented to realize the truth. He has 'peace and prosperity'—what else matters?

"Is this the Uncle Sam that we sometimes like to think is a composite of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln? Is this the Uncle Sam that the American people have so long cherished in their memories and hearts as their ideal? What has become of the real Uncle Sam? The tall, straight, lithe body of muscle, of nerve and bone, with no overpadding of fat. The fighting chin. The firm mouth. The clear eyes. The kindly smile. The Uncle Sam always on his feet, always on his job. Always ready for the emergency, always ready to help those in need. The Uncle Sam who is neighbor and friend to the world, never seeking a fight, but never shirking one; doing his duty at whatever personal sacrifice.

"Are we content with our selfish brand of peace and pros-

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perity, or are we willing and prepared to take our place in the changing destinies of the world?

"Shall Uncle Sam be lulled to sleep in the quiet before the storm?

"Europe is going through fire that she may have a resurrection into a higher life. She is going through fire of the flesh. America must go through fire of the soul. There is God's work to be done by the United States. Are we content to be at peace, and to live in prosperity at the sacrifice of humanity?"

## CHAPTER XXIX

### IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY

IN the Civil War John Wanamaker was refused for military service and had to serve in a civilian capacity. When the Spanish-American War broke out, he telegraphed to the Secretary of War, offering to raise and equip a regiment from his store family, and to go with the regiment to the front. He was sixty years old in 1898, but he was keen to serve. We have seen how he spared no expense to give the young men in his employ the advantages of military training and had been doing so for a quarter of a century before the question of preparedness arose as a national issue when the European war was raging. No young men who went to the Mexican frontier in 1915 were better prepared than those who had been cadets of the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute in the Philadelphia and New York stores. There were enough of them for two companies, and, as during the Spanish-American War, they were carried at full pay in the stores for the entire period of their service under the colors.

The re-election of President Wilson was a bitter disappointment to Wanamaker. In November, 1916, none could foresee that Germany would force us into the war by announcing the policy of unrestricted use of submarines, and Wanamaker had lost faith in the intention of Wilson to work constructively for peace while maintaining the sanctity of American lives on the high seas. Despite profound misgivings, due to the way the Republican campaign was conducted, he had counted upon the election of Hughes,

and the private files reveal the fact that he had intended to lay before President-elect Hughes the suggestion that an "American Peace Commission" be assembled in a consultative capacity. It was his idea that the Governor and one Senator from each state and one hundred men thoroughly representative of the American people should be invited to meet in Washington to formulate a constructive policy for the new administration. He was under no illusion as to the length of the war, and was too well informed to believe that the Entente Powers could be induced to agree to peace negotiations unless the United States stated definitely what obligations she was willing to assume and what stipulations she would place upon the Central Powers as the price of peace. He is on record as having declared on October 9, 1916: "It will be two years more before the war closes."

The Christmas season of 1916 was the most prosperous that retail merchandising in America had ever known. War contracts and high wages were beginning to tell upon all classes of society, and the heavy demand for everything that the general store could supply, combined with the increasing difficulty of getting goods of Wanamaker quality, proved to be a severe strain upon Wanamaker, following the strenuous and unsuccessful presidential campaign. He was ordered to Florida, and obeyed his physician. He never admitted that he needed a rest, but he did see the reasonableness of a change; and so it was that the rupture of diplomatic relations with Germany, coming less than two weeks after Wilson's "peace without victory" speech, found him far from his desk and the center of things. He telegraphed from Florida a statement to be published in the store advertisement on the morning of February 4, 1917, which he headed, "Americans, Rally Round the President!" In it he said that "the clock has struck the hour that requires loyalty to this nation and to the flag under which we have

lived as brothers." Having been disappointed before, Wanamaker did not feel sure of Woodrow Wilson, but, as in the spring of 1916, the keynote he sounded was "holding up the President's hands." To one who taxed him with inconsistency he wrote: "Every citizen's duty is to demand leadership when it is not given, but to be ready to follow the leader if he does lead; and we must remember that the voice of the people has made Wilson our leader. If he becomes that, the past is wiped out."

This correct and just attitude Wanamaker unswervingly maintained. Our War President had no more enthusiastic and loyal supporter than the man who had not hesitated to excoriate him a few months earlier. It was hard for Wanamaker to remain on the house boat *Osiris* during February and March—possibly harder than anything else that had been demanded of him during his life. He said that for the first time he knew how Milton felt when he wrote, "They also serve who only stand and wait." He had promised to stay until Easter. Never before had he been away from Philadelphia when war was imminent. But he remembered that most of his contemporaries, who had lived through both the Civil War and the Spanish-American War and who had taken an active part in those conflicts, were dead. He connected his presence at Pass-a-Grille with the fact that he was not yet *hors du combat*.

Knowing that if he thought about the war he would go home willy-nilly, before the treacherous March winds were safely over that always gave him a bad cold, he concentrated upon his business, and wrote a series of memoranda for its improvement—memoranda which contained the frank confession that his stores might easily slip behind unless the mind and will of all his associates—his own mind and will, too—concentrated upon "preparing the Wanamaker ship to sail in accordance with the new rules of navi-

gation." He asked himself: "What are these rules? Shall we hunt for them? Shall we guess what they will be? No, we shall study conditions and make the rules." He declared:

After the war ends, war contracts will cease and war prices will be lowered. The prosperity boom will therefore largely collapse unless we make preparations to safeguard the natural prosperity of our country. With war contracts closed and temporary prosperity gone, there must come a slackening in business because of a curtailment of incomes and readjustment of wages and prices. With the world at peace, America must meet competitive prices and wages.

We found these reflections jotted down on the backs of envelopes and along the margins of newspapers. They ended with the thought: "Ships get barnacles—all ships do—ours has them." Then followed a list of the "barnacles." The last comment was: "Off with the barnacles!"

And then he was flying northward, the Philadelphia weather embargo lifted, to re-enlist in his country's service.

The President's proclamation met the following response, telegraphed to Washington early on Monday morning, April 16, 1917:

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your message of Sunday met me this morning. I make free as a merchant to write this with great thankfulness for your inspired national appeal. My first thought after reading it was that it added another chapter to Solomon's Book of Proverbs.

Not only has the supreme test of the nation arrived, but the supreme test of each individual has come. All of us who live under our Flag are Americans above everything else. Politics have nothing to do with the present situation. Your proclamation makes Democrats of us all. For our Country's sake we are patriots above parties or creeds.

This is God's country, and its coins are so stamped; and the heart of every citizen, native-born or adopted, throbs with pride for our President's wisdom, and responds to your call.

Representing the people in our business in two cities, to each of whom your proclamation has been read aloud to-day in special meetings, and

Gladly they gave their lives believing that  
the home folks would honor them for  
what they are doing + at least back  
up the Government in sending other  
boys to take their places + supporting  
the war to until the sure victory  
came along -

- What is the fact to day

Do the mothers of who had nothing  
else but their boys feel that  
the surrender of their sons ~~is~~  
~~after~~ <sup>more</sup> will have been made for  
nothing when the home are not willing  
to supply the money to take the Liberty  
Bonds to pay off the soldiers debt.

DRAFT OF LIBERTY LOAN ADVERTISEMENT

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which forces include over twelve hundred for many years under military training within the stores, we accept your ideal of a merchant's duty; and whatever power of usefulness we have by association and command of markets, we place not only our business institutions, but ourselves, as a unit, for any and every service which will aid you to carry out your plans at this momentous hour.

We rededicate to our country afresh all the forces and resources we have for service in any direction, personally, corporately, and collectively, for which we are qualified. The words that you have written to the people in the proclamation stand abreast of anything written or spoken by George Washington or Abraham Lincoln.

To "speak, act, and serve together," and for our country's sake, we pledge ourselves to our utmost capacity.

On the same day he issued "to the Head of each Section, including Workrooms, Factories and Warehouses," the following order:

Please notify the people employed in your Section to assemble within fifteen minutes after the store closes at a point you shall select, in your Section or outside of it within the store, and read to them the President's Proclamation, in print to-day, of which a copy will be in your hands to give to each of your employees, if you will notify Mr. Brewer of the number required, and also a copy of the telegram that I am sending to the President to-day, for their own scrap books, as a part of the history of the times.

To sound the keynote of the Wanamaker spirit under the new conditions facing the country he published at the head of the store advertisement in both cities:

### WHAT WILL BUSINESS DO

#### WITH OUR NATION PLUNGED IN WAR?

What would great-souled Stephen Girard or Robert Morris or Jay Cooke have first thought of in a time like this?

Would one of these men have said:

*"How is this going to affect my business?"*

Brothers! Cannot we hear their voices coming down the years, and their sure and steady declaration:

*"It is not a question of how the war will affect my business, but of how my business may best serve my country at such a time."*

The best way we can serve our country, after having sent more than 200 of our young men into the army, is to provide a sure method for the people at home to get the things they need at fair prices, unaffected by war profiteering.

We shall not reduce our forces nor our conveniences, nor our advertising, nor our service, nor our liberalities—rather we shall increase them as occasion affords opportunity.

If there is waste in any direction we shall cut it out like the cancer that it is.

But we shall take away no work from any of our good and deserving people nor rights from any of our customers.

So much for a store that blazes its own trail.

There was never a time that Wanamaker enjoyed more thoroughly writing the little "editorials" that prefaced the day's advertisement. They reflected the universal spirit of the American people, and give a remarkably accurate picture of what "the man in the street" was thinking as he read day after day the developments and new events that attended the entry of the United States into the World War. Picked at random, we give:

#### ALL HANDS ON DECK

A passenger on an ocean steamship recently arriving said: "The passengers had a hurry call and were on deck inside of two minutes, because a periscope was in sight."

Not for the sound of drums or martial music, but because of the intensive spirit that is in the faces and voices of American citizens and the rallying forces around Roosevelt, tending toward a Roosevelt Army of a half million to go off without delay under the orders of the President and the Secretary of War.

There is something stirring in the American heart, such as filled it when the first shot at Lexington went around the world.

Thoughtful and anxious people believe that the future of the world is now depending on the fate of France. She must not be left alone to fight her own way.

It is the fate of the world that is in the balance.

Delirious days crowded one upon another. Rarely has a man approaching his eightieth birthday found himself the center of a host of feverish activities, and called upon to put back the hands of the clock, to deny his fourscore years, to carry burdens that would have taxed any ordinary man in the full prime of life. America's entrance into the World War, possibly because it had been so long delayed, unloosed torrents of enthusiasm, devotion, and energy. Everybody's social and business life was affected. Normal relations were temporarily—but radically—changed. There was no organization or institution of any kind that did not get into war service. Only when we consider the complexity and multitude of John Wanamaker's interests, and how he had kept active control of all of them, do we realize what the man's life was during the two years following April 6, 1917.<sup>1</sup>

Several hundred in the Wanamaker store family belonged to the National Guard and two hundred of them had spent nearly a year under the colors on the Mexican frontier. These, with other volunteers, had to leave work immediately. When the draft went into effect John Wanamaker found the number of his people in the service increased to over a thousand. Then came the auxiliary services, calling for women as well as men. To them all he bade a personal Godspeed and made their going the occasion of patriotic demonstrations in the stores. At Bethany, as in the stores, young men who looked to him as their chief went out by the hundreds, and increased greatly the number of those with

<sup>1</sup> For instance, to the delegates of the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association (of which he was president) at Pittsburgh in the fall of 1917, he wrote: "Let us go out quickly and all together for reinforcements. Count on me to do whatever the convention calls for. We need in our Sunday-school work younger people who must take the places of their older brothers and sisters who have gone to the front as soldiers, sailors, and nurses."

whom he determined to keep in touch in the American camps and in France.

In the stores the Red Cross and the Red, White and Blue Cross, quintupled their services and activities. The fifteen thousand members of the store families in Philadelphia and New York contributed to the various funds that were raised; the boy and girl cadets intensified their drills and band work and their aid in the collection of funds; and there were never-to-be-forgotten occasions, such as the visit of Joffre and Viviani, and of other missions, following the French precedent, to review the cadets at the stores.

The many problems arising from the necessity of readjusting merchandising policies and the machinery of the stores to meet war conditions increased through 1917 and 1918, and continued to demand the very best that was in John Wanamaker until long after the Armistice. He refused to delegate to others the conduct of the activities of the Bethany organizations; and he stimulated the spirit of giving seven days of the week. Nor did he refuse to listen to the appeals for his guidance and inspiration that came from church and civic organizations in which he had always been prominent. We shall not attempt to enumerate the activities he helped to direct.

In June, Wanamaker records so much time given to the Red Cross and the war loan that the reader who had no other evidence to go by would conclude that he had given up business. He speaks almost every day of "Red Cross matters" and "Liberty Loan subscriptions." At the end of the month (June 30, 1917) he wrote:

The urgencies of subscribing to Liberty Bonds and Red Cross needs have been upon us all the time and kept us busy trying to get everybody to help. I am on the four-horse coach and driving hard and trying to get everybody to pull with me. The war work goes on merrily—America does care to do her part!

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Memories of his youth were evoked by the arrival in Philadelphia of the boys for the great army that was being raised all over the country. He speaks of them as "such a homesick set from every State in the Union," and says that there were "twenty thousand of them at the Navy Yard." In July, on the old Bader farm which he owned, near Washington Lane, over which the Revolutionary troops marched to Valley Forge, he established Camp John Wanamaker, and in July it was the home of "the 2nd Regiment of Artillery, 1,200 strong, under Major Greble." To this camp he gave a library before the American Library Association entered into war service, and he anticipated the Young Men's Christian Association and the Knights of Columbus in his "entertainment hut." On July 18, he wrote:

The whole aspect of Philadelphia is changed by the bands recruiting. There is war spirit everywhere. It is more rampant and exciting in our cities than ever. Bethany Brotherhood is turned over to the soldiers and sailors with 100 cots in it. When the chaps have nights off they pay 20 cts. for bed, and 5 cts. for soap and towel, so they can use the swimming pool.

Wanamaker's greatest service, however, was directing the Liberty Loan campaigns, into which he entered heart and soul. His advertisements, his speeches, and above all his own example—he gave "until it hurt"—contributed powerfully to the success of all the government loans. It was like Wanamaker to be the one that fired the opening gun on the day the campaign for the first loan was launched and to be sitting in his office, check book before him, ready to make up any deficiency that there might be in the Philadelphia quota on the late afternoon of the last day of the drive for the Victory Loan after the war was over. He stuck right to it, educating the people to give, urging them to make sacrifices, defending the wisdom of the loans, and stoutly maintaining that no investor who held on to govern-

ment bonds would lose one cent of principal or interest, when others had grown lukewarm or skeptical or frightened.

Wanamaker's attitude toward the loan drives was succinctly expressed in an address to his Philadelphia store family on June 25, 1917, when he said:

"It is not that we wanted to get into this war, but by force of circumstances and the Providence of God, we have been compelled to take a place in it; and we are in it to stay. Money is the smallest thing that we can give."

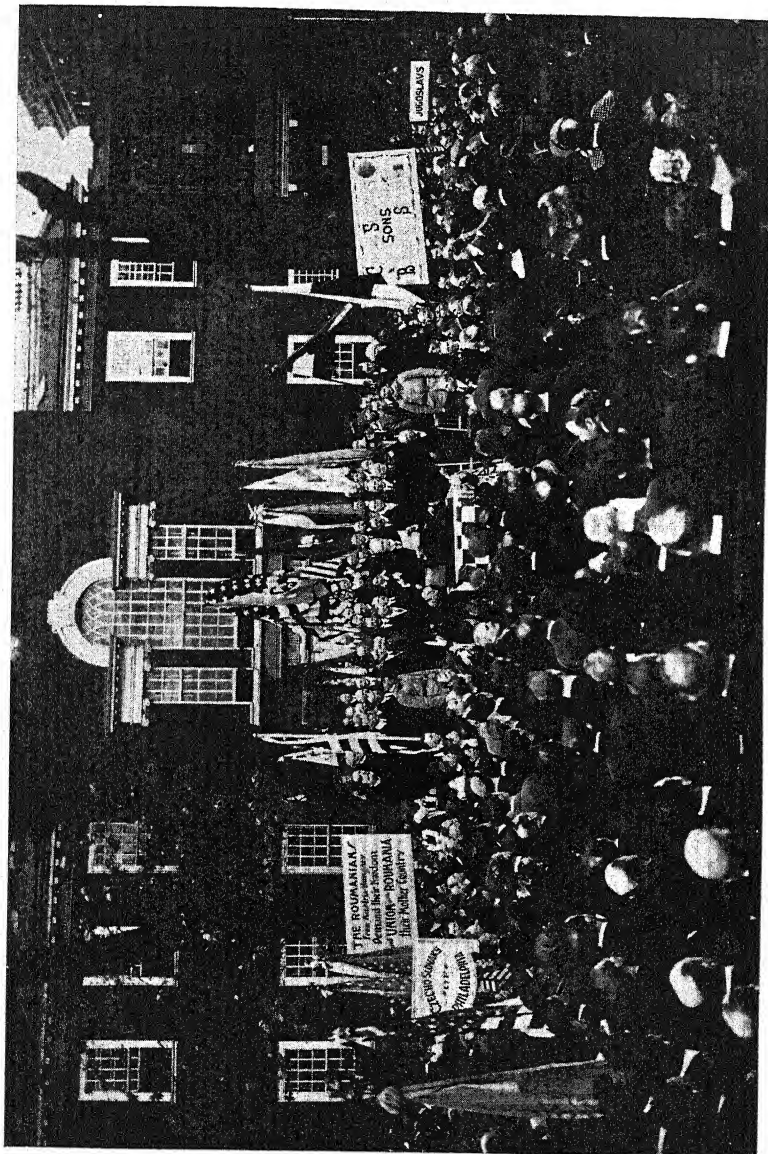
He did not object to great preparations and greater expenditures. He approved of the policy adopted at Washington to mobilize speedily the industrial forces of the country, and to place orders for everything that might be needed for an army of millions of men. The argument for haste and magnitude he had put in an editorial on May 17, in which he said:

The quicker and more complete, and even colossal preparation that America makes, the more convincing effect upon others of our ability to meet any emergency; and the sooner the European world understands this the better. Remember still more, that the sooner the power of the United States is felt as a fact, the quicker we shall bring about an end to it all over there.

On June 15, 1917, after the books closed for the first Liberty Loan, Wanamaker received the following telegram from the New York *Herald*:

Congratulations on splendid strength and advertising support you gave to Liberty Loan. Yours was far best advertising for Liberty Loan that has been done. We consider wonderful outpouring of New York money in past twenty-four hours, due to your advertising. That both you and your son Rodman each subscribed one million dollars is one more proof to justly bestowed title of America's greatest merchant. Your long record of public service as a private citizen is not equaled by any other man.

Wanamaker served on the central committee for the second loan in the autumn of 1917, and for the third loan



THE PROCLAMATION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY THE MID-EUROPEAN UNION AT INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER 26, 1918. THOMAS G. MASARYK (STANDING BESIDE MR. WANAMAKER), WHO IS READING THE DOCUMENT, IS NOW PRESIDENT OF CZECHO-SLOVAKIA



in the spring of 1918. During the third campaign he announced that he would put the gross total receipts of the sales in the Wanamaker stores for five days into bonds. On May 26, 1918, when the books for the third loan closed, he was able to announce that the receipts thus converted into bonds, plus personal subscriptions of himself, his son Rodman, and the store employees, made a total of \$4,916,517. This was the record for the stores only. But John Wanamaker's influence extended wherever New York and Philadelphia newspapers were read, and the campaign in the stores was not directed solely at the employees, but also at all who came in. Wanamaker never offered any apology for doing this. He did not consider that he was putting undue pressure upon employees or that he was breaking a business principle of sixty years by importuning people who came into his stores. There were those who remonstrated, even among his own associates. He answered them, "This is a business which is a common enterprise of all Americans, and we must see it through. A foreigner might resent being asked to buy bonds—but not an American. We must all get after one another if we are going to win this war."

The national character of the services rendered by the great merchant in this third campaign is recognized in a letter from Governor Passmore on June 9, 1918:

In closing up the work of the Third Liberty Loan Campaign, I am writing you on behalf of the Officers and Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, as well as of the Liberty Loan Committees, to express our deep appreciation of the great assistance you in so many ways rendered in the satisfactory accomplishment of our undertaking. Your very generous help throughout the campaign was a splendid offering from you to the nation in the work of financing the war, in the successful termination of which we are all so deeply interested.

On October 5, 1918, Wanamaker took a whole page in the New York and Philadelphia newspapers to plead for the fourth loan, in which he declared that "although the war

is practically won, this loan must be subscribed and oversubscribed." His reasoning was cogent. The government had put forth a stupendous effort. We had gone ahead, as we should have done, without counting the cost, and now at the moment of victory, if the government were embarrassed for want of funds, everything might be lost. Because some of his friends had predicted failure for the new loan and were saying that its flotation would lower the market price of all the previous loans, John Wanamaker made the effort of his life, and his son was in complete accord with him. He and Rodman Wanamaker each subscribed \$3,500,000, and the two store families reached nearly \$6,000,000. In a public statement Wanamaker announced that the stores and their owners had subscribed \$12,773,000 to the Fourth Liberty Loan. Later subscriptions brought the total to \$15,000,000. John Wanamaker said: "The savings of my lifetime are in my businesses, and as far as possible I have put them at the disposal of the government, just as many of our own people have done with their own savings."

Just before the end of the campaign for the fourth loan Wanamaker took another full page. He reproduced a cartoon of Thomas Nast, used in the Civil War, with a fort and a soldier on guard in the foreground, looking across the Potomac to the Capitol in the background. This was called, "Hold the Fort." In his plea Wanamaker stated that "with the change of but one word, the song of my personal friend, P. P. Bliss, fits to this very day." He reprinted the Gospel Hymn and begged that it be sung "in town and country, hamlet and crossroads." The plea called attention to the sacrifice the soldiers were making and mentioned the names of the battles in which they were engaged. He ended up:

The writer is saying to himself—what is money in comparison with the duty that conscience and the country call upon us for in this crisis?

What is the worth of anything we have—grounds and buildings, stocks and bonds, and bank deposits—if our country is allowed to fail at home or abroad in this extremity?

When the fifth call came Wanamaker was in Florida. But he returned in time to take personal charge of the advertising campaign for the fifth drive. On May 12, 1919, he announced that over twelve hundred Wanamaker employees had subscribed \$11,915,000, making "the total to the five war loans of \$39,289,550."

The aftermath of these loans was not particularly happy for any one. Most Americans, including our richest men, subscribed for more bonds than they could possibly carry. Paying in installments became a great hardship if not an impossibility, and there were thousands who had to sell bonds at considerably below par because they had urgent need for the money. To tie up all one's savings in an investment at low interest, which has to be held to come out without loss, is not good business. But Wanamaker never pretended that it was good business. He did not subscribe to the successive loans as a business investment, nor did he solicit subscriptions on this basis. He had grasped from the very first moment the significance of the loans and their vital importance. He knew that the government had to have available the funds that could come only from the people of the country pledging their credit. Very often, in the course of the drives, he used the expression "war measure."

But after it was all over, he continued to affirm that while the loans were not a profitable investment, they were a safe investment. When he found that some of his employees, who had a legitimate need for ready money, would have to sell their bonds at a loss, and felt that their chief had been wrong in assuring them of the soundness of the investment, Wanamaker did not hesitate a minute. He issued an order

that in such cases employees who had subscribed to bonds in the drives through the stores could take them to the cashier's office and get one hundred cents on the dollar. John Wanamaker himself, with all his wealth, was not able to carry the \$20,000,000 he had subscribed for personally, or had ordered bought for the firm. It was too large a sum; and at the very time he was buying in at par bonds of his employees, he was relinquishing large quantities of the same issues at a very great loss. He did not regard the loss as a business loss, but as a contribution gladly made to enable his country to triumph over her enemies. That was how he put it. He had no regrets and he was impatient with those who had. A man was once holding forth in his presence on how the country went mad over war-loan drives. "And blessed madness it was," interrupted Wanamaker, "for which we have every reason to be proud. When our boys were giving their lives, it was the least that we could do to give our money."

The subscriptions to Liberty bonds meant lending money, not giving it. In all his appeals to the public, to his store families, and to his Bethany people, Wanamaker always made that perfectly clear. Putting savings in Liberty bonds was an act of faith; setting aside a portion of earnings to pay for installments on subscriptions was an act of loyalty. It involved self-denial, but in the long run was to the advantage of the subscriber. It took away the temptation to keep up the orgy of spending that had been the phenomenon of 1916. At the best, falling in line and taking the quota suggested by those in the management of the loan drives was an inconvenience; it could not be called a sacrifice. The country at war demanded still more. Every citizen was called upon to give, according to his means, for the support of the Red Cross and other relief organizations, and to make possible the welfare work of the Young Men's Christian

Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Knights of Columbus, Jewish Welfare Board, and Salvation Army among the troops at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup>

In Philadelphia Wanamaker gave the use of University Hall for American Red Cross headquarters to be "used as the place of rendezvous and public workroom of the women of Philadelphia who can spare time to assist in getting ready the things wanted for the army and navy at home and overseas." From the minutes of the Red, White and Blue Cross, it appears that in the first month of the war this organization raised \$5,000 in the Philadelphia store alone for the National Red Cross. All the employees of John Wanamaker were organized into units for military and physical training, rifle practice, first aid and hospital nursing, officers' training, preparation of supplies for soldiers and hospitals, dietetic and food conservation classes, and the growing of foodstuffs. The use of the Grand Court and the great organ were given for concerts to raise additional funds for specific causes approved by the head of the business. Wanamaker could rightly boast that his store family was participating in every form of war activity and formed "a cross section of national war effort."

In 1917 Wanamaker announced the opening of a "military service bureau," with the promise, "We'll get your Christmas gift to your soldier." Orders were cabled and filled by the Paris and London houses. This service met with such popular response that it was continued through 1918, and thousands of orders were taken daily. But while facilities were accorded for serving the American Expeditionary Force, it was found necessary, as the war continued,

<sup>1</sup> While the first Liberty Loan drive was on, the employees of John Wanamaker were asked for \$6,000 in one day for the Ice Ambulance Fund—and they gave it! In the appeal, Wanamaker said: "Be a philanthropist for one day and have the feeling in your heart that you are giving something by setting aside a day's wages for the old flag and for our boys who are defending it."

to curtail—and in some particulars suspend—the services to customers in which John Wanamaker had been a pioneer. Customers were asked to carry packages whenever possible, and in many lines of merchandise the return privilege had to be withdrawn. Wanamaker wagons could no longer call for goods to be exchanged. It was explained that all this was due to lack of trained personnel and to the imperative necessity of cutting down on unnecessary labor.

In January, 1918, when a coal famine threatened, he led the way in co-operating with the government by cutting the store day to six and a half hours, opening at ten o'clock and closing at four-thirty. These shorter hours were afterwards reintroduced in the summer of 1918 "to relieve overcrowded street cars, thus leaving means of transportation free for the increasing army of war workers in factories." For several weeks in midwinter, he joined with other retail merchants in acceding to the request of the government to keep the stores closed all day Monday to save coal. In his restaurants, famed for the quality of their bread and pastries, he cut the wheat content down to twenty-five per cent—and in cakes to zero—in order to save wheat.

But he felt that he could help in a still more practical way "to back up the President of the United States and the War Councils of Defense and Conservation, who are putting up bars against a further advance of prices of food, iron, copper, and various other commodities." He announced that "as owners of the largest stock of dry goods and housekeeping wares and articles that we have had in forty years, we have concluded that it is our duty as merchants now to take a part in assisting the policy of the government to hold down prices." Followed the announcement of a "different kind of sale for one week" in October, 1917. Although his business was increasing more rapidly than ever before, Wanamaker announced that he had decided to offer



JOHN WANAMAKER AND GENERAL PERSHING  
(In Independence Square, Philadelphia, on September 12th, 1919, at the spot  
where General Pershing planted the tree which is shown between him and Mr.  
Wanamaker)



\$1,000,000 worth of merchandise at a drastic discount "wholly in the interests of the public and with a consciousness that there are many things now on hand which, in some instances, if sold cannot be replaced at the present prices. . . . We are offering an entire Million Dollars' worth of goods, carefully repriced. Never since the days of the Civil War has any such offering been made by a retail establishment."<sup>1</sup>

At no time during his life was Wanamaker a more prolific and forceful writer than during the years of his country's participation in the World War and the Peace Conference. Just as his stores and his church and Sunday school were representative of the activities of the entire United States, his editorials and speeches reflected the psychology of the American nation. He was the typical American, strong, tender, at times passionate in the intensity and bitterness of his feeling, fanatical in his belief that the war was a crusade, unconsciously anxious to atone to the Allies for our late entry into the war, nervous about subversive influences in the life of the nation, believing for a time that the retributive element in justice needed to be stressed and later yielding in his thinking about the problems of peace to the dictates of common sense. Having passed through the period of approving—against his better judgment—the vindictive announcements of fire-eaters, he came more quickly than most of his contemporaries to the frank opinion that constructive peace demanded letting bygones be bygones. His distrust of panaceas kept him from being swept off his feet by the League of Nations propaganda; and the big, broad life he had led made him realize that keeping alive hatred and suspicion of enemies was a manifestation of fear or shallow-mindedness.

But even when public opinion was blowing hot and cold

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 431.

before we entered the war, when the country was bewildered and hesitated in getting the right start toward the proper concentration of every form of effort and energy for winning the war, and later when there were many who thought the war was over before the victory was won, John Wanamaker's public utterances showed him to be a constructive thinker, wise beyond his fellows, and gifted with prophetic vision. He announced that "there should be unity of belief in the ability and war plans of the President and his hard-worked Cabinet, and the unquestioned support of the Congress without bickerings and backslappings of party newspapers or political organizations," and that "the imperatively essential thing is the ready money, absolutely necessary to meet promptly the unavoidable expenses of the United States Government." He preached consistently the duty of solidarity among Allies, and the visits of the French, Belgian, and Italian missions during the war gave him the opportunity to drive home in editorials and addresses the fact that the United States was not fighting a separate war. He did not like the word "associates," and, not being a diplomat or a historian, he refused to use it. To him we had only allies—and they remained allies after the fighting was over.

In 1918 he became one of the directors of the War Welfare Council, and took an active part in the May "War Chest" campaign. He had indorsed from the very first the suggestion that the six great national organizations engaged in welfare work should pool their efforts in soliciting funds. This was not only good business, he said, but was a beautiful symbol of national religious solidarity in the face of the enemy. To bigots who wrote to him that one or the other of the welfare organizations was getting more than its share "in proportion to the source of the contributions," he replied that it was immaterial who gave the

money. It was the gift of the American people to the American soldiers. Although he had a partiality for the Salvation Army, which he did not conceal, he was in harmony with the other members of the Council in their policy of apportioning the War Chest funds strictly in accordance with the actual work the organizations were doing and the field they were covering at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the second year of our participation he told the Carlisle Chamber of Commerce that "we must give all that we have. It is not possible to bankrupt the United States. There is a providential solemnity in the fact that it rests upon the rich, great, and powerful United States to win this war." And scarcely six weeks before the Armistice he gave as a reason for "oversubscribing" the Fourth Liberty Loan:

That the world may be stirred afresh to a sense of the full and firm purpose of the United States that the war is not to stop until thoroughly and permanently fought out to a complete victory.

It was at this time that the American Expeditionary Force had succeeding in putting regiments into the thick of the offensive all along the line, and reports of casualties were pouring in from Flanders to Alsace. Men from both stores<sup>2</sup> and from Bethany were giving up their lives, and a member of the Wanamaker family had fallen.<sup>3</sup> But these sacrifices, he kept repeating, "bring to our minds each day what Lincoln said on the battlefield of Gettysburg."

In the closing days of the war, John Wanamaker became

<sup>1</sup> He retained membership on the Council after the war, and a copy of the audit for 1920, with his comments, is in the private files.

<sup>2</sup> On November 18, 1921, Wanamaker wrote to a friend: "Both our stores sent lots of men, 1,490 to be exact, and 17 from this store died on the field of battle. Their names are inscribed on the Gold Star in the Court. Probably as many from the New York store were killed."

<sup>3</sup> His nephew, Lieutenant Thomas Brown Wanamaker Fales, was killed while carrying back his captain from No Man's Land, July 31, 1918, in the Battle of the Ourcq. Lieutenant Fales was in Company M of the 109th Infantry.

deeply interested in the Mid-European Union whose object was "to establish a continuous barrier of free, co-operating, democratic nations against imperialistic aggression from the Baltic to the Mediterranean as a Bulwark of Freedom for the world." Its slogan, "co-operation, not coercion," appealed to Wanamaker; and he had the deepest admiration for its president, the Czech professor, Thomas G. Masaryk. On October 26, 1918, Wanamaker took a prominent part in the ceremony of signing the "declaration of common aims" by representatives of twelve subject nations in the room in Independence Hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed. This was called—and turned out to be—the "death-warrant of the Austro-Hungarian Empire." Wanamaker gave the chairs used by the signers, and afterward presented an American flag to the Union at a dinner in the Red Room of the Bellevue-Stratford. Turning to Masaryk, he said:

"My dear brother and friend, we are here to talk to you heart to heart. None will ever forget the wonderful gathering of the people who came over here to live with us, and to whom America is the adopted country, but who remain attached to those lands now about to be freed from the oppressor. I laughed and I cried with them. I remember looking into the face of an old woman. There were tears running down her cheeks, because the day had come which she had been waiting for all her life. You have walked over the same ground that Washington and Franklin and Jefferson walked over. Your footsteps followed theirs to-day, and what you have done will be written in the history of the world. This country and this country's people are back of you in your signing of your Declaration of Independence."

In his war speeches President Wilson put in the foreground the kind of peace America was fighting for. Senti-

mentally the people applauded. Fighting for righteousness, for "making the world safe for democracy" and, "a better place to live in," furnished the momentum and aroused the enthusiasm necessary to call forth sacrifice and devotion and to carry the effort through to a successful end. But few Americans had looked ahead. The question of a constructive peace, what it should be and how it should be made, despite the President's utterances, entered very little into the thinking of Americans, even of those who, like Wanamaker, had been so interested in the re-establishment of peace in the earlier years of the war. Naturally the objects of the war were viewed differently after we became a party to the struggle. We lost our vantage point of academic detachment. Almost without being aware of it, the United States changed from its earlier position of potential arbiter to that of one of the plaintiffs. When the defeated nations sued for peace, the victors, in no judicial frame of mind, became judges.

On January 1, 1919, Wanamaker wrote concerning Wilson's trip to Paris:

No surrender, no compromise, no half measures—this is the speech of the plain people everywhere throughout the United States these days. It is heard in the hotels, on the street corners, and in railroad trains as one travels about.

Three months later, on April 1, his editorial said:

In his personality is incarnated an almost incomprehensible truth. The President represents the belief of hundreds of thousands of men of both hemispheres, not in detail, but in principle, that wars of sword and gun and battleships shall forever cease.

It is a man-and-nation saviour the world is looking for to-day.

Whatever others think, the President has no misgivings of the central fact of his mission. He has gone to respond to a summons that was to him as powerful and as irresistible as the star that shone over Bethlehem was to the Wise Men of the East.

And he commented upon the presentation of the first draft of the treaty to the Germans in May:

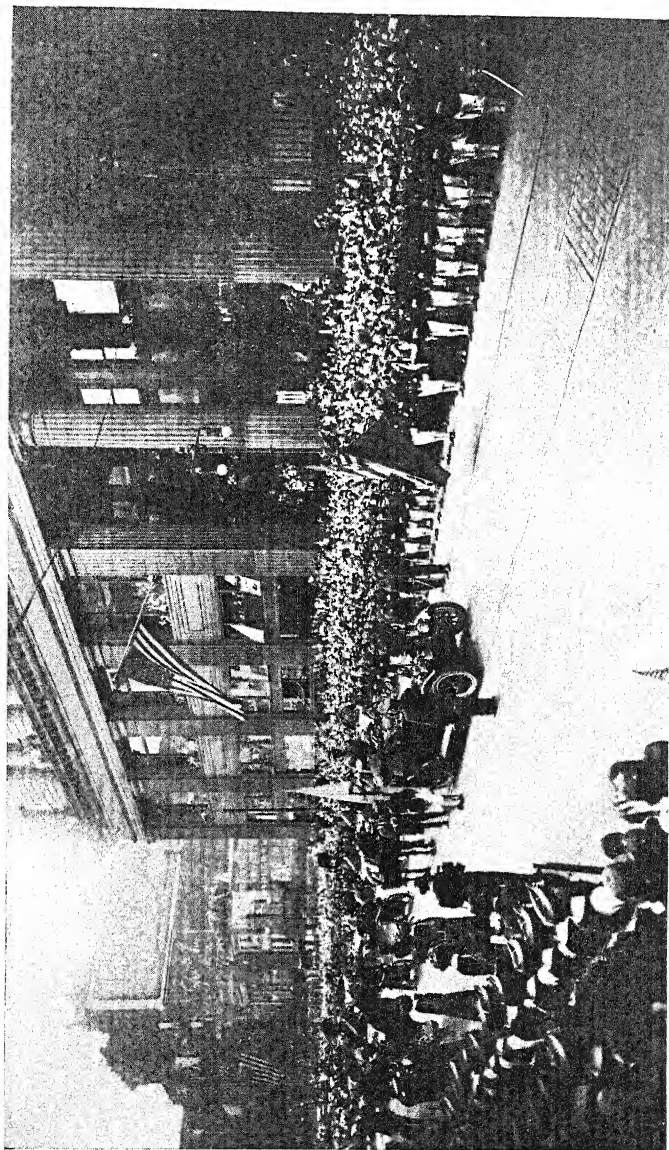
The darkest day that America ever knew was that of April 15, 1865, when President Lincoln died by assassination. The nearest approach to such a day was that of the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, four years ago, by the warship of an enemy, who thereby forced us into the world-wide war. No other day since Lincoln's time was so full of tears and sorrow.

On the anniversary day of the *Lusitania* horror, the German envoys at the Trianon Palace at Versailles, where the peace delegates assembled, confessed responsibility for Germany's acts, and the propositions of a peace treaty were placed in their hands by Premier Clemenceau.

And after the Treaty of Versailles was signed he wrote:

The twenty-eighth of June, for all time, will be spelled with stars the globe round. It marks a great patriotic deed, nobly done, which must now be woven into the warp and woof of the life of every true American.

A few days later came his eighty-first birthday, on July 11, 1919. In his acknowledgment of the greetings of friends, he said, "I am thankful to be alive in these wonderful days of the new birthday of our nation." His first reaction to the peace was thankfulness that it had been concluded and blanket approval of what Woodrow Wilson had accomplished in Paris. He was riding on the wave of great enthusiasm at the time, welcoming home employees and friends, and greeting guests of the nation, Cardinal Mercier, King Albert and Queen Elizabeth, Marshal Foch, General Pershing, and General Diaz. There were neither time nor inclination to examine the peace that the Senate was asked to ratify, or to give serious consideration to the proposal that we should underwrite the treaty by entering the League of Nations without reservations. But when he came to read Senator Knox's speech and to talk with him, he promptly modified what he had said on the spur of the moment. He had a deep respect for Knox's opinion, and saw the justice



GENERAL PERSHING AT THE WANAMAKER STORE, PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1919



of the Pennsylvania Senator's keen and searching analysis of the work of the Paris Conference. So we find him writing on November 14:

Neither for temporary pride nor party, nor for human friendship, should we gamble away at Washington any part of the Constitution of the United States or the Declaration of Independence. We must hold steadfastly to the foundations the nation was built upon by Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Hancock and Hamilton. A hurried half-done piece of work only adds to our discontent, and puts off further the unity of the world and the settlement of the labor and financial questions now so disturbing.

More than a year later, after Harding's victory, he wrote:

The United States, in putting an end to an evil war, can never consent to any diplomacy that will plant the seeds of another war.

In 1921 he gave his name to the appeal of President Harding to call a conference for the limitation of armaments, and so far had he traveled from the spirit of 1918 and 1919 that he said to the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Convention on October 12, 1921:

"We are deeply concerned that no mistake should be made by the United States in reaching conclusions as to the disarmament of nations. We desire respectfully to go upon record that war cannot end so long as we provide battleships, cannon, powder, and shot, and maintain standing armies. We believe that Christian patriotism and justice are capable of forming permanent high courts of peace and arbitration to meet any and all conditions and differences that may arise throughout the world. To this end we appeal to the churches of all and every denomination to unite heartily and organize actively for the purpose of opposing all policies that do not mean for every nation the total disarmament of all armies and nations. The idea of war must of itself, in time, take its place among the crimes of the world."

His Armistice editorial announced that the stores would

be closed all day because of the great service at the Arlington National Cemetery, and he dared to say:

That 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 will be remembered as one of the great hours of the world's history. While it was reported the world over as a humiliation to the Germans, it was certainly a wise and courageous confession for them to make, that they had ceased to fight for a fruitless cause, that they were tired of the war, and would go no further. Was it not Queen Louise who, after the Battle of Jena, went with a rose in her hand to plead with Napoleon to stop the war? Would that there might be a complete disarmament of armies and navies in every country and that the world might hold soldiers of peace only! Would that the grave of the unknown hero, around which the President and a distinguished host will to-day be standing, might be the last of the graves of unknown soldiers!

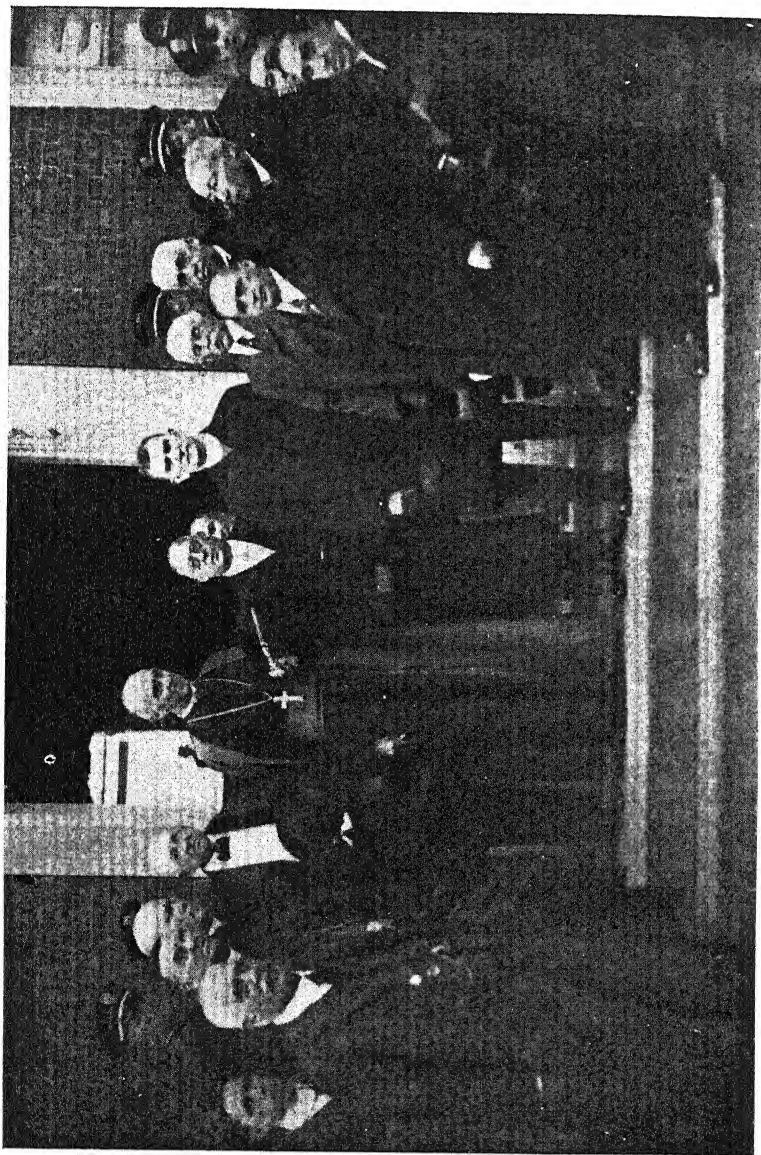
This statement brought a number of letters from super-patriots, who did not grasp the fact that an old man, nearing the end of life, was beginning to see face to face. To his critics he answered in a spirit of forbearance, repeating the message he had sent the year before to the World Sunday School Convention in Tokyo:

Many of us in the Western world believe that the clock of destiny is striking the hour of opportunity for all the nations to take an advance stand in the arts of peace, good will, and good fellowship, and work for the betterment of the people. To see something good in one another and to help develop it will strengthen and broaden the nations.

A boilingly indignant and hysterical letter from a prominent Philadelphia woman received this answer:

The war being over, I shall not be one to keep up the hatreds that it engendered (especially when President Harding is making such a sincere effort to bring about disarmament and a sentiment for peace among all the nations of the earth) any more than I would try to keep alive the passions of our own Civil War.

A lion of strength and determination while the fighting



RECEPTION TO DESIDERATUS CARDINAL MERCIER, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 1919 (JOHN WANAMAKER IS ON THE CARDINAL'S  
RIGHT)



was on, John Wanamaker in the closing days of his life rendered still greater service to his country in sounding once more the note of Lincoln's second inaugural speech, which he used to quote to those who thought that he ought to go to his grave with malice toward some.

## CHAPTER XXX

### A BLOW AT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

IN 1920 the cost of living in the United States reached a new high level. The war had been over for a year and a half, but prices kept mounting steadily. Since there was no longer the money to pay what was asked, people went without even articles of every-day necessity, for the first time in their lives deciding to make last year's things do. The Christmas season of 1919, although the larger general merchants, notably Wanamaker, were doing the biggest business in their history, foreshadowed an automatic buyers' strike in many lines. Just as manufacturers had become accustomed to war orders, retailers had grown to believe that the consuming capacity of the people would remain what it was when wages were abnormally high and there was plenty of work for everybody.

Manufacturers were the first to feel the pinch of changed conditions. Contracts for future government supplies had been canceled when the war ended. The momentum of filling unfinished orders did not carry the manufacturers farther than the summer of 1919. All through the winter that followed they hoped for, but did not know how they could bring about, a return to normal conditions in home markets. They could see that deflation was going to set in, but they were unable to prepare to make it a gradual process because they could not get large advance orders from retailers. Retailers, in turn, thought not only of moving stocks already purchased without a loss, but also of the possibility of a heavy drop in the market after they had placed their

## BLOW AT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING 429

orders for the next season. They believed that they had to keep prices up to liquidate existing stocks. What followed was logical. Manufacturers, selling very little and hard pressed for money, continued to raise their prices instead of lowering them.

The time had come which Wanamaker prophesied nearly a decade before. At the Jubilee luncheon given him by the merchants of New York on November 16, 1911, he had said:

There is a time surely not far off when the high cost of living must be cut down. The rumbling of the discontent that crosses the ocean to us ought to be a suggestion of what is apt to happen here in the near future.

In the early part of 1920, on his houseboat in Florida, John Wanamaker set himself to study this serious situation. From different sources he got tables of comparative prices, and he had the benefit of reports issued by the Federal Reserve Bank. He discovered that since April, 1915, virtually every article of wearing apparel, house furnishings, and dry goods, had tripled or even quadrupled in price. Turning to his physician, he exclaimed: "What are the poor people going to do?" The patient could not be kept much longer away from Philadelphia. When Wanamaker got back to his office he found that conditions were worse than the reports had pictured them, and that the Fair Price Commission of the Department of Justice, at work in Philadelphia, had disclosed intolerable conditions in many lines of retail trade.

Wanamaker summoned his department heads, and asked them for specific reports of prices. "What do you find in regard to the new stocks you buy? What is the financial situation of the manufacturers from whom you buy? Is there any hope that prices will not continue to advance?" We give a sample of the replies:

Upon my return this morning from a two weeks' vacation, I find that the prices have advanced upon washing machines, old-fashioned ironware, trunks, aluminum ware, tin ware, clothes wringers, and sewing machines, which really are the heart of the house-furnishings business. Trunks have advanced in cost four times in about five months, and clothes wringers three times in about four months. There is no certainty of the quotations upon house furnishings of any description. For two years it has simply been a question of "make shipments." This condition, according to well-informed factory chiefs, will exist at least until July, with a possibility of slight recessions at that time, due to the supply about meeting the demand and the shelves in the factories accumulating some merchandise for prompt forwarding.

One of our salesmen this morning said that unless he received two scales promptly, the orders would be lost, and in looking up our requisition, we find that the scales were ordered last November and are made in New York City. Stock has necessarily been ragged, but customers realize conditions and have been very patient; if a two-quart saucepan was wanted and out of stock, the customer would be satisfied with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  quart pan, and that attitude prevailed all along the line, the customer being in the position of the merchant—taking what was obtainable and paying the price.

Ever since the United States entered the war people had been talking about "the high cost of living." But wages had soared; and even where high prices caused hardship, there was the natural explanation of abnormal war conditions, entailing sacrifices on everybody. After the war, however, the "H. C. of L.," as it was commonly called, became a matter of universal resentment. The government investigated. But that was all! There was no pronouncement from Washington. President Wilson lay ill in the White House. Since the summary dismissal of Secretary Lansing, no Cabinet member dared speak for the Administration. When Wanamaker realized that prices were still on the upgrade and that relief could not be expected until midsummer, if then, he decided to do something about it.

He had a precedent in his own business for what was in

his mind. In 1917, when the government regulated coal and prices were beginning to go up inordinately, he had launched a "million-dollar sale," which had had immediate effect. His executives in Philadelphia and New York had co-operated splendidly with him at that time, and they were now ready to work out and carry through, under Wanamaker's direction, another and far greater offensive against high prices. With \$20,000,000 in stocks in the two stores, Wanamaker believed that if he slashed prices on this amount of merchandise, he could compel other New York and Philadelphia retailers to follow suit. Some of his staff who knew of the plan suggested ten per cent on staples, twenty per cent on fashions and seasonable goods, and thirty per cent on novelties. "We are not a 10, 20, 30 cent show" was his comment.

Late in the afternoon of Saturday, May 1, John Wanamaker decided to offer everything in the stores at 20 per cent discount from the marked price. As none of his salespeople knew he was going to do this, there would be no chance to reprice stocks in any department. He wrote out in his own hand the page advertisement that was to affect profoundly the economic life of the nation, and showed it only to his son Rodman, who was in full sympathy with him, and to his executives and advertising managers. In strict confidence it was given to the New York and Philadelphia newspapers for publication on Monday morning.

The Wanamaker advertisement on May 3, 1920, announced that the time had come to break the high cost of living. On that date and until further notice the full retail stocks of the Wanamaker Stores in New York and Philadelphia (excepting about \$50,000 of articles held under price restriction) would be offered to the public at twenty per cent reduction from actual prices. In order to influence manufacturers and speculators holding goods for

higher prices, and in order to continue these sales, Wanamaker agreed to expend \$1,000,000 each week in taking over any desirable merchandise and to pay cash for it on the day of delivery. He declared that he would "give our customers every advantage possible in keeping up the sale by means of any reduction that we can get from the manufacturers in expending this money." In conclusion, the advertisement said:

We are simply mastered by a spirit of duty to help the people who have helped us in this renewed effort to start a movement in lowering the selling price of merchandise and to bring on more quickly the "better days coming" to this Nation.

The approval of the Department of Justice's Fair Price Committee was instantaneous. Before noon Wanamaker received the following letter from its chairman:

It was most gratifying to read your splendid statement in to-day's press and I want to express the appreciation of this Committee for your co-operation in lowering prices in the face of a rising market.

This Committee has worked earnestly to bring relief to the public by securing a reduction in prices—stimulating sane economy and at the same time vindicating the good name of our reputable merchants.

If the merchants in general will manifest your "spirit of duty" and the public will respond by only buying what they actually need and labor will give adequate service for just compensation and all of us then lock arms to bring about the "better days coming" instead of calling each other names, we shall avert the financial crash that seems almost inevitable.

The response of the public was equally prompt. Before the end of the first week it was evident that the "buyers' strike" was at an end. On Saturday, May 8, a world's record was made for amount of sales in a retail store. On that day alone, without any back orders from other days or accumulated mail orders, there was actually sold in the two Wanamaker stores more than a million dollars worth of merchandise. On the tenth day Wanamaker was asked if

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he would accept a check for all his stocks at twenty per cent off. This offer he published in the store advertisement on the morning of May 14, with his answer:

No. Absolutely and emphatically, no! Our sale is not to raise cash, but to bring down prices to the public—to the public, not to other merchants.

Some New York and Philadelphia merchants "got on the band wagon" immediately. Others tried to devise schemes of reduction sales that would not seem to be an imitation of Wanamaker's initiative. But it was not long before "twenty per cent off" had to be adopted by all, except by leading local general merchants. It spread like wildfire all over the United States. Merchants of other cities sent telegrams asking permission to reproduce the Wanamaker advertising. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the newspapers mentioned John Wanamaker probably more than at any time since he had been Postmaster-General. The verdict of public opinion was strikingly expressed by Cassel's cartoon in the *New York World*. John Wanamaker was pictured with a bat about to strike a baseball, labelled "H. C. of L.," over the caption, "Knocking a Homer."

Of course there were critics who said that the reduction sale was a "flash in the pan advertising stunt," and could not last more than a fortnight; or that Wanamaker was hard-pressed for cash and was liquidating his stock; or that the announcement of this policy was a confession of profiteering on the part of retailers. But Wanamaker declared that he had no intention of stopping the sale until its object was accomplished. He pointed out that he was using the money that came in to buy new stocks. Only the law of supply and demand, functioning normally again, would establish a fair price level. He had simply come to the conclusion that "somebody had to do something" and that "the nationwide response to his initiative was a choice between lower



*The original drawing of J. H. Cassel's famous cartoon  
"Knocking a Homer"  
printed in The New York Evening World, Sept. 5, 1920, and reprinted in the  
newspapers throughout the country*

"KNOCKING A HOMER"  
John Cassel in the *New York World*, May 5, 1920

prices and restricted consumption." The public had been educated to the use of less merchandising, which was leading to "contracting business and curtailing employment." What had almost instantly followed his move was proof that business men had been determined "to avoid this condition through releasing hoarded stocks by concessions in price to be shared by both the manufacturer and the retailer."

He kept hammering daily his offensive. On May 18 he announced:

The whole country seems to be waking up to work down some of the cost of living. There are good signs of decisive progress in the last fortnight, and if all the critics would join us in an honorable attack against advancing costs, the great victory could be won.

At the end of the third week, when his attention was called to the criticism of a Florida merchant, who declared that prices were coming down, that it was "the fierce weather they had had all spring in New York that caused Wanamaker to unload, and that his and similar much-touted sales were made from motives of pure business expediency," he said:

Thank you for your kindly interest in telegraphing me the rigmarole of some one published in the *Tampa Times*. No such statement ever reached me in my life that had so many falsehoods in it. Our business never was so large as it has been this year before the patriotic movement. We had no overstock and were especially free from old stock, the large sweep of daily business flushing the pipes and keeping us with a clean stock. The rainy weather did not sensibly affect our business. The creating cause of the inception of the movement was the pressure to sell on owners of Liberty and Victory Bonds, under the influence of the Federal Reserve Banks, the poverty of the people who had taken small amounts to reduce a Government Bond to a discount of between 15 and 20 per cent.

The action of the Federal Reserve Bank in Washington, stating publicly in the newspapers that the tendency of prices for the Autumn would be upward, led me to resolve that I would do my utmost to stand in the way of raising the high prices already current.

We have sold practically one-half of our stock with which we began, and we have bought with cash at retail selling prices seven millions of dollars. If you have any one in Tampa or anywhere else who would offer to take our entire stock and give us a certified check on any bank or trust company for the full regular prices, without the 20 per cent deduction, they could not have it.

For the great purpose of halting the disposition of some manufacturers and corporations to continue to raise prices, we have undertaken to serve notice that we will not stand for any increase of prices. We are not agents for manufacturers or corporations. We own the stock we have, and it is paid for. We are not cutters of prices, but we have used, temporarily, the opportunity to awaken the people to some duty besides simply making profits, irrespective of what is due to our patient customers who, during the war, have met the high prices, and who are restive at the idea that they have got to continue to be at the mercy of people that, by combinations and selfishness, insist on getting out of their business all that they can, with powerful influence and great wealth back of them. You are at liberty to use this in any way you like.

The twenty-per-cent sales continued through June. On June 23 Wanamaker gave notice that the sale would close on July 2, because he believed that the movement for lower prices had accomplished its purpose. The statistics of the United States Department of Labor show that the crest of high prices was reached in May, 1920, and that the H. C. of L. began to grow less immediately following the Wanamaker campaign.<sup>1</sup> In nine weeks, with the cash received from the sale he had bought new merchandise to the amount of \$13,511,000.

<sup>1</sup> Taking March, 1913, as 100, these statistics give 199 for January, 1919, and 247—the peak of high prices—for May, 1920. By January, 1922, prices had receded to 138. The Federal Reserve report for the Ninth District at the end of May, 1920, said: "The steadily accumulating evidence of the month indicates that the peak of high prices has been reached and that a general break has occurred." Three weeks later the same source reported that the "recent changes in prices afford a basis that may broaden into a far-reaching alteration in the essential price structure." Accumulative evidence is found in the reviews of Bradstreet and Dun, and reports of New York and Philadelphia banks at the end of May and the beginning of June, followed by Chicago and St. Louis in the second week of June.

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After it was all over Wanamaker wrote:

We closed the doors of our New York and Philadelphia stores last week on what some people derisively called a "thunderbolt of commerce." As owners of the \$20,000,000 of merchandise, it was quite within our right to do as we desired with our own property.

Without consultation with the nabobs of statesmanship, banking, or manufacturing, one man alone prepared the statement published Monday, May 3, and not ten persons had any idea of it until they read it over his signature that morning. It was met by the opposition of neighbors, trade jealousies, monthly and other newspapers, supported by certain tradesmen to exploit certain lines of merchandise. We had counted the cost and took the chances and kept on bombarding big prices with powder at our own cost, and kept it up for two months instead of the two weeks we intended.

This great feat was accomplished when Wanamaker was approaching his eighty-second birthday. Cyril Jackson, a great Dean of Christ Church, at the end of a long life, gave a brilliant undergraduate the secret of keeping fit and reaching old age with effectiveness unimpaired. To Robert Peel he said: "Work very hard and unremittingly. Work, as I used to say sometimes, like a tiger, or like a dragon, if dragons work harder than tigers. Don't be afraid of killing yourself. Only retain—which is essential—your former temperance and exercise, and your aversion to mere lounging, and then you will have abundant time both for hard work and company." No formula more aptly expresses the spirit and practice of John Wanamaker. He was never through with life. Up to his last days, he did not cease dominating the world in which he lived. Not being afraid of killing himself by work, he still had in his eighties abundant time both for hard work and for company.

The blow at the high cost of living was Wanamaker's own idea, put into execution by himself, and carried through against tremendous pressure. From the beginning of the sale he was besieged by some of his own people as well

as by manufacturers' associations and trade organizations to make exceptions to the discount rule. Some interests pleaded with him; others tried to intimidate him. There were threats of lawsuits and boycotts. But he pursued his own way, knowing that his objective was right and confident that he could attain it. He did not get flustered or angry.

Wanamaker was fortunate in having a son who saw eye to eye with him and in being able to count upon the co-operation of a group of devoted men to his stores who had long been concerned over mounting prices and who had been working with him for years to protect the interests of customers. The "twenty per cent discount sale" was a logical result of what the whole Wanamaker organization had been thinking for a long time. But it was John Wanamaker himself who inspired and directed the sale. Only a merchant who was the sole owner of a gigantic retail business could have launched such a campaign and have seen it through successfully.

*Private Office*  
*John Wanamaker*  
*Philadelphia.*

**July 26, 1915.**

**Mr. Wm. G. Miller,**

**Shiremanstown, Penna.**

**My dear Sir:**

**Thanking you, dear friend, for  
your letter of the 24th, here today, please  
spare me a little while before you erect any  
monument for me. There are many things I would  
like to do. I realize however, your good spirit.**

**Very truly yours,**

*John Wanamaker*

**NOT READY TO QUIT!**

Rodman's Birthday

February 13, 1918

ON SCANDALIBISCUS

Passa Grillo

Florida

We will place a seat at our dining table tonight - dearest man of all men - and we shall feel a special nearness to you on this little boat of comfort and new health that you secretly provided as a Hospital & a pleasure for your Old Father -

Really - most precious Rodman -  
Every inch of the 107 feet long "Hibiscus" its decks drawing room & dining room & its excellent sleeping rooms seem to be your long ready & affectionate arms around me, guarding me, embracing me day & night -

I am taking the best of care of this

So my precious son Rodman Hummel: — Philadelphia.

highly favorable opportunity to  
obtain a restoration of my health  
that I may return as early  
as possible to lift from your  
shoulders the heavy loads that  
you so willingly bear.

How good you are!

I never knew any father whose  
son was equal to you —

you are always in my thoughts  
and prayers + I am sure I  
would give my life for you  
to save you in any peril!

I hope to give my life a  
little longer, to be beside you  
to work out the visions together,  
that we both have in our minds +  
hearts. With love ever abounding,  
your old Father

## CHAPTER XXXI

### AFTER SIXTY YEARS

"**H**OW do you keep?" said an old friend, who came to congratulate Wanamaker upon the sixtieth anniversary of Oak Hall.

"Happily busy," was the answer.

Because it was a truthful reply John Wanamaker did not have to fear old age. He had dismissed worrying about his physical condition when he was rejected for military service in 1861. In 1921 he could look back over the years and remember no period during which he had worried about himself or complained about circumstances over which he had no control.

Sixty years of uninterrupted work in one business is no small achievement, whatever may be the degree of success attained. But Wanamaker had started his own business at the age of twenty-three, had developed it into an establishment known throughout the world, and at the age of eighty-three, he was still its head, making ambitious plans for the future.

How had he done it? That is what the old friend wanted to know.

"It is all in the two words with which I answered your first question," said Wanamaker. "Many people are busy because they have to be. I am busy because I want to be. So I am happily busy."

After 1912, when he began the daily store editorials, Wanamaker wrote less in his diary than had been his custom during the two preceding decades. But there is enough to

be able to state that he was fully as buoyant and cheerful as he had ever been, and that he continued to omit allusions to physical disabilities. From the diary a reader gains no knowledge of how Wanamaker was confined to the house at times with heavy colds, which were a source of anxiety to his physicians. Wanamaker was not interested in recording disagreeable things; nor did he write health bulletins to his friends. And he agreed with Mark Twain about weather.

In the autumn of 1915 we find:

A most lovely enjoyable happy November. I shaved me at 6:30, and am on the usual rounds of these busy days trying to spur up everything to a better speed.

And at the beginning of the next Christmas season he wrote:

I am right well—at work on high pressure, up to the last notch of endurance, but enjoying it all, and feel that I am making good for my boss, R. W.

This is the first reference to the fact that the son had come more and more to assume the responsibility for the business. Frequently after 1916 Wanamaker said that "R. W." was "the boss." It was an affectionate and generous way of stating his dependence upon the younger man, whom we have mentioned in those pages only when necessary to make the narrative clear. The letter reproduced here tells the whole story. The senior Wanamaker gave more of his strength than formerly to public affairs, to writing, and to the problems of the many outside organizations in which he was interested. His eagerness to do things was unabated, and his efficiency was unimpaired. But the tremendous effort he made from 1914 to 1919 in relief work, in national politics, in helping to win the war, was possible because he

did not need to be wholly engrossed in the problems and management of the stores.

And yet, with all his willingness to defer to his son and to lean on him, John Wanamaker never could dismiss the business from his mind. He was always thinking about it and for it; and he did not drop quietly into second place, nor did he surrender authority.

"The time will come when you will have everything running smoothly, and then you can sit back and breathe a deep sigh of relief," said a friend in the third year of the New Kind of Store. The forty-one-year-old Wanamaker of 1879 simply grinned in answer. Telling the story years afterward, Wanamaker said that any man's incomprehension was incurable, who thought that a time would arrive when a merchant could stop straining and take things easy! Such a time never came to Wanamaker. He knew that it would not, and he did not want it to. He was as keenly alive at eighty as he had been at forty to the imperative necessity of passing constantly in mental review his organization, his methods of business, his problems; and then, after the inspection, of getting down to hard thinking to find ways of strengthening weak places, rendering better service, increasing the volume of business.

In Florida, on his houseboat, he used to make notes for the stores, just as he had been doing throughout his career. The octogenarian would reorganize the business in his mind, question the work of every department; and he believed that there was need for changes throughout the business. How his mind, far away from Philadelphia and New York, worked in the interests of the Wanamaker stores is shown in the notes he was constantly making. For illustration, five closely written sheets, dated "Gulf of Mexico, February 16, 1917," and headed, "How to be better organized," contain a consideration of the problem under sixteen heads,

followed by the suggested solution. He worked out on paper a new "general staff." He reclassified the store under eight sections, which he called "combination movements of departments." He enumerated a long list of "new conveniences and attractions to be introduced." In 1918 and 1919 these notes were added to, and many of the ideas were carried out. An idea of 1920, brought back from Florida, broke the rising cost of living. Could a man grow old who, after sixty years in business, said, "I walk faster and I work better than I did when I was half my age?"

Elsewhere we have spoken of Wanamaker's habit of making tours of inspection of his buildings. He felt that he could not from his office run a business that was dependent upon personal contacts of employees with customers. He had to be out on the floor. In the American navy the captain of the ship is required to make a personal inspection from hold to masts at stated intervals. Wanamaker had always been accustomed to do this, and, undismayed, he kept on making the rounds when his buildings became vast, and there was New York to think of as well as Philadelphia. It required walking miles, and there was some remonstrance in the latter years on the ground of possible over-exertion. But Wanamaker knew that moving about helped to keep him young; and he declared that the more extensive his establishments, the more imperative the tours of inspection of the owner. The private files contain transcripts of notes taken during these tours.

On May 16, 1921, he visited the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh floors. On May 31 he started on the sixth floor and went down to the second. A glance through the notes is all that is needed to realize that the merchant of eighty-three was as observant as ever. He hated rubbish and disorder anywhere on his premises, and insisted

on having stock rooms and factories spick and span; he thought of hygienic conditions for his employees; and he had an eagle eye for overstocking and overstaffing. In regard to merchandise, he was still watchful of quality and price, and he still had ideas, bold and original, concerning display. He was still thinking of better lighting and better ventilation; and he asked himself, "How can we render better service to our customers?"

The records of 1920 and 1921 show also not only a continuance of interest in, but the study of new plans for, improving the quality of stocks, the salesmanship, and the educational and recreational facilities of the Wanamaker stores. With all his outside interests and activities, the stores were never absent from his mind. The aged merchant talked to his buyers with the force and acumen of earlier days; he visited departments for conferences about their own particular problems; and he had time and strength—and better still, patience—to give to individuals who, for one reason or another, were not making good in the duties assigned to them. In advertising conferences, which took place almost daily, he was the same vigorous, positive chief that he had always been.

The celebration of Wanamaker's sixty years as a merchant had nothing perfunctory in it. It was not in the nature of a tribute to a man who *had been* a force and who *had done* notable things. The last two years had been by far the greatest of the Wanamaker business in volume and value of sales, in advertising feats, and in leadership in the mercantile world. During 1920 Wanamaker had personally conceived and put through the twenty-per-cent discount sale. On the morning of April 26, 1921, at the Philadelphia store, it was the active head of the business who received the congratulations of his employees. Representatives of the Paris, London, and Oriental houses brought

gifts from the Wanamaker staff abroad, and a lacquered box with the felicitations of the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Speaking for the New York and Philadelphia houses Mr. Rodman Wanamaker said:

"Great chief and founder, I have been chosen by your workers, one from their midst, to represent the New York and Philadelphia houses on this eventful occasion. In the midst of our store family I am so full of emotion that no words would express fully the feelings of 16,000 hearts that beat oftentimes for you. We thought of what we could do for you to-day, but we knew that in your modesty the only thing we could give would be a simple token from our hearts. This gold medal, with the eagle grasping the American flag, is an expression of your life. On it we have put your motto: LET THOSE WHO FOLLOW ME CONTINUE TO BUILD WITH THE PLUMB OF HONOR, THE LEVEL OF TRUTH, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRITY, EDUCATION, COURTESY, AND MUTUALITY. On behalf of the Philadelphia and New York organizations I bestow upon you their highest testimonial of love and devotion."

From his office Wanamaker was taken to the Bellevue-Stratford, to a testimonial luncheon that had been arranged by a committee of citizens, headed by the mayor. More than a thousand men, prominent in the political, educational, religious, and business life of the city and nation gathered to do honor to the merchant who had been for a generation the best-known Philadelphian. New York was represented by her mayor. Governors of Pennsylvania past and present, Senators, a cardinal and other churchmen, were at the head table; and letters and telegrams from the President of the United States and rulers of other countries were read. One after another the heads of large general stores rose to their feet to give a personal greeting to the

man who had blazed the path, starting before most of them were born, for the new era in retail merchandising.

The mind of the guest of honor was, characteristically, on the future. When he arose to respond to the greetings and congratulations, he gave little time to a review of the past. The manuscript that he had prepared was thrown aside. He asked permission to "ramble on a bit, instead of making a set speech." He made a plea for attention to the port needs of Philadelphia, picturing a great future for the city, and insisted upon the importance of the approaching sesquicentennial in 1926. It was a symbol and proof, the invitation to the world to help us celebrate, of our recognition of the interdependence of nations:

"There is something in the American heart that wants prosperity for other people. Then, too, we can't prosper just by ourselves. The country must learn that. We can't put a wall about ourselves. We must keep the gate open and have prosperity together."

He declared that he was overwhelmed by the honor done him, most of all because he was in a gathering of friends, and he did not dare to let his emotion get the better of him. After all, his life had only been that of a man who had tried to serve, and because he was still eager to serve, the occasion was not his swan song.

"Life is a beautiful thing. Our Heavenly Father did not put us down here to mourn and lose ourselves in some kind of a fog. I am always glad to get up in the morning to see the sun rise and to feel thankful for the light of day. Life is a beautiful thing, I say. The world is unfinished. We are here to play our part in it and of all things we need only to want to make the best of our own lives.

"I recognize profoundly the goodness of the Ruler of the Universe to grant me the privilege of so many years. A thousand years in His sight are but as a day. I have

counted up the days I have been permitted to live, from the 11th of July, 1838, to the present day, and I have had 30,262 days.

"But I recall the silver anniversary of Pope Leo's pontificate. I happened to be in Rome at the time, and was one of the 125,000 gathered under the magnificent dome of St. Peter's to acclaim him. Leo was ninety-two, and very feeble. One of his old friends came to him, and said, 'Your Holiness, you look pretty well. Why, I think you might live to be a hundred.' The Pope was ninety-two. The little man, with his smiling face and the fine hands I saw folded over his breast, answered, 'Why limit me?'"

What John Wanamaker said at the sixtieth anniversary luncheon expressed exactly his feelings. There was no thought whatever of slackening the pace or of resting on past laurels. He was not going to be limited! Not so long as there was strength and opportunity for service! After the celebration Wanamaker arrived at the store earlier each morning, until his office staff had to be there before eight o'clock to anticipate him, and he kept it up for months.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### FLORIDA TRIPS

WANAMAKER never took a vacation in the commonly accepted sense of that word. There were times when he felt that he would like to get off somewhere for a real rest, and have day follow day with nothing to do, nothing to think about. In a wallet we found, torn from a newspaper:

I wisht I was a little rock  
A'settin' on a hill;  
A'doin' nothing all day long  
But just a'settin' still.  
I wouldn't eat, I wouldn't drink,  
I wouldn't even wash,  
I'd set and set a thousand years  
And rest myself, by gosh.

But he never entertained notions of this kind for long. It was not in him to rest; and he refused to rest, even when warned to do so by his medical advisers. The physician of his latter days told us:

Mr. Wanamaker worked seven days in each week, and after six days at his business his Sunday at Bethany was one of the hardest days of all. He worked as he did everything, with his whole heart, and each day to the limit of his strength. He had such supreme confidence in his recuperative powers that in the latter part of his life he made no concession whatever to age, and took no rest until compelled to. While he loved the out-of-doors and particularly the water, he loved his business and his church first. He got more pleasure out of his work than he could get out of play.

In his diary we find:

7      My doctors are all the time  
half mad with me because it  
seems so natural to me to be  
doing the same volume of work  
that I did thirty years ago.

He was not a business man of the type, however, that sticks to his desk year in and year out, never leaving because of the obsession that his associates could not get along without him. He did not take himself seriously enough for that; and once he had organized his business and put solid foundations under it, his common sense prompted him to get far away frequently. He felt that the merchant's horizon needed constant broadening by travel and by engaging in outside activities of various kinds. From boyhood up his life was a contradiction of the narrower interpretation of the proverb of the shoemaker sticking to his last. He welcomed the quickening influence of an occasional sojourn among other people in his own and other lands. Much of his best thinking for the business, many of his happiest ideas, some of his important decisions, came when he was off somewhere and "able to see things in perspective," as he expressed it.

Through the years we find mention of many trips to Saratoga Springs, Bedford Springs, Virginia Hot Springs, Bretton Woods in the White Mountains, and of summering

at Cape May and Atlantic City. During four years he gave up business to serve in Harrison's Cabinet. At this period there were long trips across the continent, into Mexico, and to the Chicago World's Fair. For forty years he had the habit of going to Europe. The last transatlantic crossing was in 1912, when he made a spectacular return to reach the Chicago Convention in time to second the renomination of President Taft.

During the last decade of his life Florida trips gave the annual change. Wanamaker yielded to the insistence of his son and his physicians, and went away every year after Christmas, to remain in a warm climate until Easter.

The Florida climate agreed with Wanamaker; and the houseboat life that it afforded was ideal for a man of Wanamaker's temperament. He did not like hotels. Trains and steamers were hard on him. With the houseboat he had his own home and could keep on the go. Best of all, the houseboat was a floating office; and he could work and read to his heart's content. Once he got to Florida, he loved the life he led there. But it was always exceedingly difficult to get him to start south. We have said that he stayed in Philadelphia until he was compelled to go. But it was not his physician, and not even his son, that compelled him. Each year the same thing happened. The houseboat was ready in November. Wanamaker would keep postponing his departure, and then say that he did not propose to miss the Christmas season in the store and at Bethany. Next he would think that he was going to pull through the winter all right without Florida. Despite previous experiences (he was extremely susceptible to colds) each winter he would put off from week to week what reason told him was a necessary thing to do—to leave Philadelphia for a warmer and more agreeable climate. He would stay until he caught a severe cold, take to his bed, and then, as soon

as he had recovered sufficiently to travel, he would be whisked off to Florida.<sup>1</sup> Invariably he fought with all that was in him against the necessity of going away, but finally, having to admit defeat, he felt free to turn to what he would next best enjoy—a Florida trip.

Wanamaker was "a good sport." He accepted defeat cheerfully. When one door closed definitely on him, he did not stand futilely pining. He wasted no time in regrets. Once he was off to Florida, he forgot that he had not wanted to go, and gave himself up entirely to the business of regaining his lost strength and getting as much fun out of it as he could. He liked to start his winter trip as far north as the season and the weather would permit. He was delighted when he could board the houseboat at Charleston, and on the return voyage, if time permitted, he would not take the train until he reached Savannah. His physician has given us a graphic account, from which we quote:

A houseboat offered the best opportunity to lead the kind of life that Mr. Wanamaker preferred. The boat had a broad beam for safety and to give plenty of room, with wide deck spaces, partly protected, where Mr. Wanamaker could be out-of-doors, yet sheltered from the wind. It was of small draft in order to negotiate the hundreds of miles of shallow water that lie just behind the coast line, all the way from Charleston to the southernmost tip of Florida. The consequent slow cruising rate Mr. Wanamaker did not mind, as it was part of his enjoyment to be able to see everything he passed. But he had also a small, fast, very seaworthy power boat, of which he was very fond, to use for ocean fishing and for trips up narrow, winding streams, where the larger boat could not go.

Immediately on leaving Charleston we would enter the first of a series

<sup>1</sup> In an undated letter, written in December, 1920, Wanamaker said: "With to-day's storm raging I do not know now whether I shall get away, and it is so difficult to change reservations on R.R. trains. I am not coughing, but I am so very hoarse. It is three months since I have been able to attend Bethany. Yet I am well physically—only weak and worn and weary and feel the loss of opportunities to restore the strength expended during the last two years. The *Gadfly* lies waiting at Charleston."

of long, narrow, winding channels, mostly natural, but some made by widening and deepening tiny creeks, with now and then a cut across a narrow neck of land. Then there would be bays, where for a short time we felt the roll of the sea. At times the necessity of following the marked channel would take us almost, but never quite, into the ocean. Much of the distance between Charleston and Jacksonville is through marshes, but these somewhat monotonous expanses had an unending charm for Mr. Wanamaker. Nothing that we passed seemed to escape his eye, and nothing was too trivial to interest him.

The farther south he got, the greater was his interest and enjoyment. As much as he enjoyed the first few weeks, they were preparatory to the real business of the vacation. He planned to take three or four weeks at easy stages to reach Miami. During this time his life was ideal for rest and recuperation, which was essential, for he had invariably used up his strength to the limit in Philadelphia, cutting into his reserve to a dangerous extent. He would spend the day in his chair on deck, reading, playing innumerable games of dominoes, of which he was very fond, and writing the daily editorials for the advertising page. Whatever he was doing, he always kept his eyes on what was passing, and would frequently get up to have a better look at some flock of birds or another boat. By the time Miami was reached, his strength would be built up to a degree that made it safe to take short outside fishing trips.

In the days when all the world had not yet flocked to Miami, John Wanamaker had turned from Jacksonville and Palm Beach to the southern part of Florida. He was one of the first to discover and enjoy Turtle Harbor and Angelfish Creek. In the transparent water he never tired of watching the brilliantly colored angel and parrot fish, the turtles, and the crawfish against the background of coral and grass. After Turtle Harbor and Long Key, the Wanamaker houseboat turned north on the west coast, with Pass-a-Grille as the objective. He preferred Pass-a-Grille and St. Petersburg to any other part of Florida, partly because of the beach on the Gulf Shore, whose shells fascinated him, but mostly because of the kingfishing. If Easter came early and the kingfish ran late, it was not difficult

to keep him at Pass-a-Grille until after Easter, even in 1917, which had, as he declared, "the most momentous April since 1861."

Although he liked to catch different varieties of fish, when the kingfish came, he wanted to get the first one and, when the run was at its height, the most. For two seasons in succession, he was "high boat," 286 fish in one day, 280 of them kingfish. He loved this gamy fish, large, swift, and savage, which leaped into the air when it missed the bait, sometimes more than 10 feet. He would often say, describing the day, that not one was shorter than his arm, and mindful of the fisherman's reputation, he would appeal to his physician. While the kingfish were running, he fished every day, all day, except Sunday, and he would not come in until the approach of darkness made it risky to delay longer to enter the pass.<sup>1</sup>

A prize was offered by the local fishing club for the first kingfish of the season. In the very last year of his life, John Wanamaker won this prize. We found the check for five dollars for the "first kingfish, season of 1922," among his papers.

Wanamaker's writings about Florida are too numerous to quote. Fishing he mentioned frequently. He said that he cared more for tarpon fishing by moonlight and that shark fishing was "great sport." Glancing over his penciled notes, we see that they show his deep interest in the "ten thousand islands, a shark fishing region," of which he wrote:

Not many people go there, for they are afraid of snakes and crocodiles. But I go there at the end of every winter. And I sit in the summer-house on one of the islands, very early in the dawn-time, when

<sup>1</sup> The St. Petersburg *Daily Times*, March 26, 1919, gave a two-column head to Wanamaker's record catch of 146 kingfish in a day. For several weeks after his return he kept this newspaper in his desk to show to friends, and seemed for the time being prouder of the fishing exploit than of stories in the metropolitan newspapers about feats in the business and political world.

**AMERICAN BANK & TRUST CO.**

63-76

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. *Mar 10 1922* No. *811*

PAY TO THE  
ORDER OF

*John Hanamaker* \$ *5.00*

*Five 00/100*

DOLLARS.

*(First King fish  
Season of 1922)*

*E. W. Jewett Jr.*

Edward W. Jewett, Jr.  
PASS-A-GRILLE, FLA.

the morning star is going to meet the sun. I watch the sunrise. . . . At certain seasons early in the year people do come here because of the huge tarpon, so beautiful, so wily, and so hard to induce to come on board a boat. . . . Successive generations of the tree families have come and gone and repeated themselves. Cedars, buttonwoods, pines, mangroves, red and white palmettoes, and the same unbroken silence and loneliness pervade sea and sky. The virgin forests and the dense undergrowth of leaves and flowers whisper the songs that nature taught them. A little hut of an early settler. Wild birds. Raccoons. Water rats all about. Myriads of small mosquitoes.

Back in 1905, when Wanamaker was at The Breakers in Palm Beach, he did not have a high opinion of wintering in Florida, of the people he met there, and of what they did. Several passages in his diary indicate this; and he wrote that he would far rather be in Europe than in Florida. But that was before the houseboat days, when he knew Florida only as a succession of pleasure resorts with large hotels. After he got accustomed to the kind of trips we have described on his "little houseboat," as he affectionately called it, he preferred cruising in the inland waterways of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to any voyaging that he had ever done. He did not miss Europe. For months he did not sleep on land, and with difficulty could he be coaxed off the houseboat to a meal. Once, when the boat was being repaired and was three days on the stocks, he stayed aboard the whole time.

In 1916, the year before he chartered the *Osiris*, he took his Florida trip on his son's steam yacht, the *Nirvana*. He boarded the yacht at Charleston, stopped at Jekyll Island, Jacksonville, Miami, Key West, Havana, Kingston, St. Petersburg, and Tampa; then back to Key West and Miami, Savannah, and Charleston, where he took the train to return home. The letters written on this trip show that he no longer had the old joy in being on the ocean for days on end. He was always wanting to put in at places to get

his mail, and to see things and people. For instance, on January 24, 1916, he wrote:

ON BOARD "NIRVANA," lying out five miles from Miami on a/c of the shallow water not admitting a yacht so large. We arrived here yesterday, Sunday, at daybreak, and all well and without any mail since we embarked. The mercury is at 82. The sea all around where I am writing is alive with gulls, sharks, and sunshine. I am breathing the good air to get back the strength that my ever-piling up colds at Phila. draw away from me.

Yesterday after breakfast we were toted, rocked, and rolled over a rough sea in the steam launch to My-O-Me. It is baby-filled and its air is Dee-lishus. After hearing William Jennings Bryan teach an open air Bible class in the park at 9:45 we went to Church and heard a good sermon—then we had luncheon in a big hotel where I tried and couldn't get a room because they were full and hadn't even one room. I saw the famous Democrat of Louisville, Henry Watterson of the *Courier Journal*, and had a good talk with him. I told him I liked his mighty war talks in the N. Y. *Herald*.

Afterward called on Mr. and Mrs. Bryan at their Cocoa Nut Village Cottage and had a fine hour. Then we raced back to the ship ahead of a threatening storm, which turned around after we arrived and ran away. I am better for the out-of-doorsness and warmth and I may stay awhile at Miami if I can get a fit place.

Wanamaker did not try the luxurious *Nirvana* again for a long trip. He preferred houseboating, partly because of the constant little things he could be seeing and the fishing, but also because his houseboat was ideal for giving him out-of-doors and office hours at the same time. He was unhappy when he was not working. On the ocean the wind blew the pages of his book or newspaper and carried off his papers; his houseboat was arranged so that he could have fresh air and sunshine and still be at his desk.

On March 28, 1918, he wrote:

I have been right well, fishing and resting in the open. To-morrow will be the last day of fishing. I am going out for tarpon, the big fish, so wily and strong and so hard to catch and to hold, as it has not teeth

and its jaws are all thick hard bones. Now we are on the home stretch after these two months of utter laziness.

Wanamaker's idea of "utter laziness" is amusing. The biographer finds among his papers of February and March, 1918, an amazing variety of writings and drafts of plans for Bethany and the business and soldier welfare work. When he felt that he was "resting" and indulging in the luxury of "utter laziness" he was turning out editorials and war-loan advertisements, and made a detailed plan for a rearrangement of departments on the various floors of his Philadelphia building.<sup>1</sup>

The next year he made another plan for both stores, and reorganized entirely on paper his "Down Stairs Stores." He drafted a long memorandum to the Presbytery of Philadelphia about the future of Bethany Collegiate Church; and had a list of hundreds of names of Brotherhood men which he had checked for sending postcards. His 1919 Florida diary was a little red engagement book, in which he jotted down all sorts of ideas. On February 12, for example, it was the draft of an inscription for the war memorial of Bethany Church, and the next day it was an advertisement, beginning: "Wanamaker Antique Galleries. Exceedingly moderate prices. Heirlooms in silver." The merchant in Wanamaker never suffered eclipse. He was proud of his calling, and it was uppermost in his mind throughout his life.

The diary of 1920 is prefaced by a series of epigrams, mostly relating to business. Among them we find, next to the entry recording putting out from Charleston, this sentence in big letters: **YOU HAVE GOT TO RUN A STORE THAT**

<sup>1</sup> This necessitated early rising, which was easy—and the natural thing—on the houseboat. A friend, who was with him on one of the trips, told us: "He did his best writing between five and six in the morning. He was always out of bed before the sun came up, and the first thing he did was to eat a big juicy apple."

PEOPLE WILL FEEL AT HOME IN! Of this trip he wrote to a friend:

It was on December 17 that we went out from Charleston in this good boat *Gadfly* and we have slowly sauntered over the back channels—narrow and shallow—greatly enjoying the silences and the scenery almost closed in all the way by the islands covered with mangroves and rubbers, with hedges here and there of blowing hibiscus. St. Augustine—where we tarried for a night—and West Palm Beach had their brilliant poinsettias abloom.

As for my health, it is better. I feel rested and stronger, but I was jaded and down beyond words. I have gained by being out-of-doors on deck or on a fishing boat all day. I am here in the Gulf of Mexico where Shark River empties into the Gulf. There are no post-office facilities nearer than St. Petersburg—two days distant—and no railroads nearer than Tampa, I think, or Fort Meyer. Think of being away from the P. O. for three days of beautiful sailing and restfulness. But I have written some poor little corner pieces.

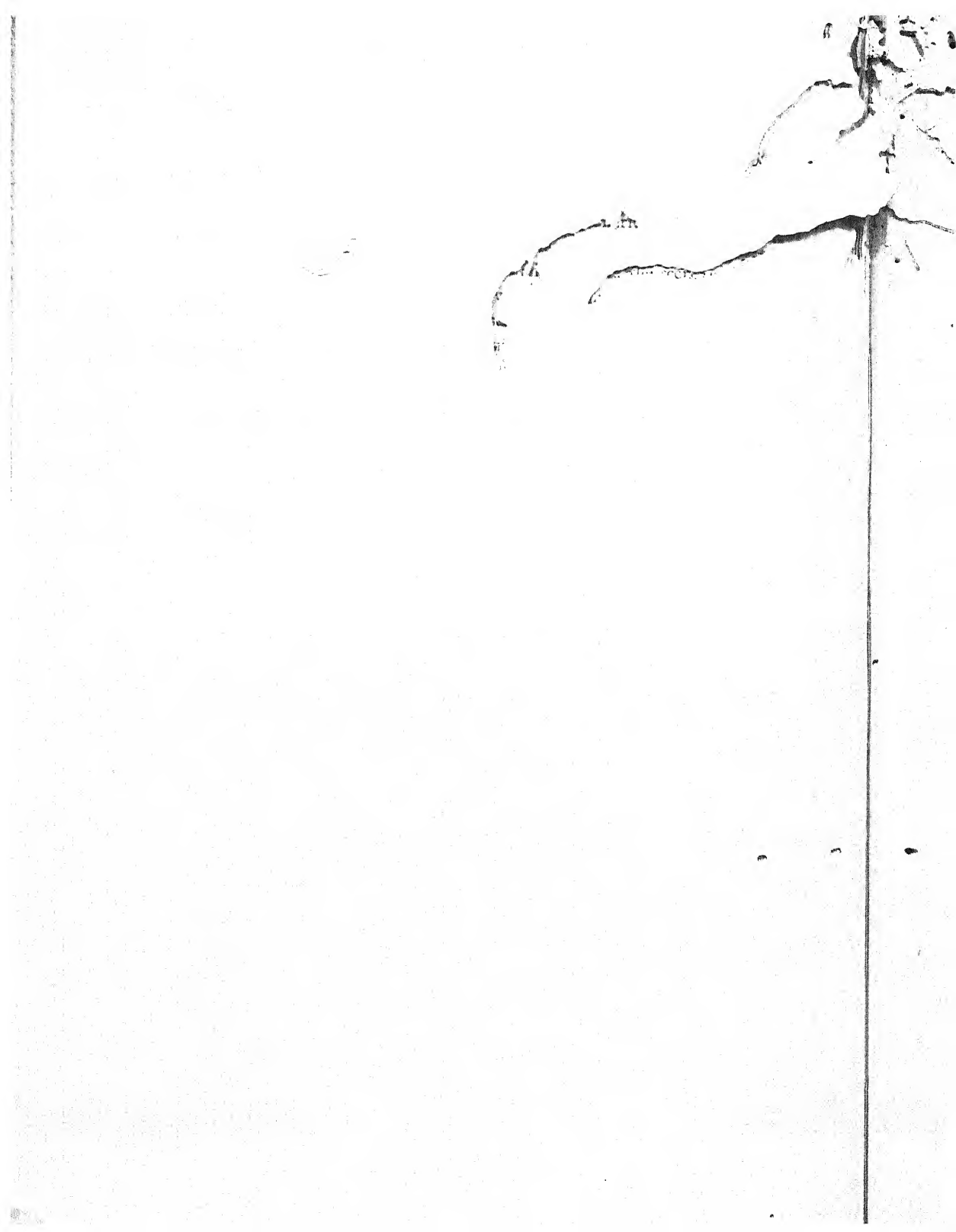
He wrote also a series of striking advertisements for the Penny Savings Bank, and advised some real-estate people about developing a large tract in the Everglades.

The last Florida trip was in the first months of 1922, when Wanamaker won the prize for the first kingfish at Pass-a-Grille. He spoke at the Tampa Rotary Club, and was elected an honorary member of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. Homeward bound in April, he told Florida friends that in the autumn he would listen to his medical advisers, and get back before Christmas.



AT LINDENHURST IN 1921

(Photo. by Harry S. Hood)



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### LAST DAYS

IN a burst of enthusiasm, in 1915, a Pennsylvanian wrote to John Wanamaker declaring that a monument should be erected to him by public subscription. He received this answer:

Thanking you, dear friend, for your letter of the 24th, here to-day, please spare me a little while before you erect any monument to me. There are many things I should like to do.

It was a constant thought of the "many things" he wanted to do that kept Wanamaker young and bubbling over with good spirits. Because of the "many things" he could say with conviction, when he reached his eightieth year, that Stevenson's lines appealed to him:

The world is so full of a number of things  
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Physically there were times when nature flashed a red danger signal, especially at the approach of winter. Mentally Wanamaker never felt old. He refused to think of his age as a handicap or deterrent to any of his activities. As early as 1900 life-long friends began to die. For more than two decades he lived on, a busy man, surviving younger contemporaries. Wanamaker once said that while no man had the right to regard himself as "immune from the Harvester," he was justified in assuming that he was going to live. He could "leave the call in God's hands." This was certainly Wanamaker's philosophy. He was so taken up with "many things" that his mind was not upon death,

but upon life. Of course this attitude made him the despair of his physician, who had to struggle hard against the stubborn unwillingness to take proper care of himself. On the other hand, in keeping alive and well his splendid mental attitude more than offset the risks he took.

We have seen how he never started to Florida until he had to. He enjoyed the Florida months keenly when he got there, but he always felt that the business needed his presence. This conviction is expressed in one of his famous epigrams, "The best fertilizer for the farm is the footprint of the farmer." No wreck of a man, victim of the ravages of time, but an upright figure, with springing step, smiling face, and alert eyes, walked through the stores day after day in 1921 and 1922. He was still the master of his business. His presence, he believed, was good not only for the stores, but for himself. This thought he expressed in one of the last editorials:

#### WHY SHOULD A MAN SHRIVEL LIKE A TREE

when he comes to middle or old age? Long years well spent need not wither his powers of mind, heart, and body. Humping off by himself all the time is a great mistake. It is not true, as he thinks, that nobody wants him. Be it so in some cases, anyway, the fault is half the time in himself. No man has a right to be in his family or in society a sourball such as we used to buy for a penny when we were boys.

There were those who thought Wanamaker was too enthusiastic over *Pollyanna*. The book was criticized as literature and as philosophy of life. But Wanamaker, aware of all the good-natured fun that was being poked at *Pollyanna*, continued to give away copies of the book. The man who had gone beyond his eightieth birthday could demonstrate from his own life the truth of the theme of the book. Because of the giver, it could not fail to be good medicine. People came to Wanamaker with their problems, eager for the advice he could give them out of his rich

experience, and they were sometimes a bit mystified when he simply told them that everything would come out all right and handed them a copy of *Pollyanna*.

"Easier to say than to do, you think, but I have done it, and I am doing it now," said Wanamaker to a Washington merchant, who had come to him in a crisis in 1921. "You just have to keep a stiff upper lip and say to yourself that worry is the worst enemy. 'It is all expressed in two lines of one of the soldier songs: 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile—smile—smile.'"

A favorable atmosphere in which to keep cheerful was created around him by the store family. That his people responded to his unvarying cheerfulness had much to do with his not feeling the weight of age. Their affection for him gave him joy; and in their loyalty he renewed his strength. The tribute of the merchant who had been in business for more than sixty years to those who worked with him is treasured by them:

This old store is one of the best examples of the possibility of keeping young. Look at the people, many of whom have served together for a lifetime. We live in a clean, bright place, full of cheerfulness; we have the things that people want when they come to buy; we have something to do that we like to do; and there is nothing around us like grouchiness, suspicions, scolding, quarrels, to darken the sky of the day. Everybody draws the line even at frowns.

On January 6, 1922, the Associated Press received a telegram from Florida that John Wanamaker had died. The rumor was denied; but one news agency insisted on hearing his voice over the telephone; and a Philadelphia newspaper said that the denial would not be convincing unless the representative was allowed to see the merchant, who, they were assured, was neither dead nor in Florida, but right in his office at that moment in an important conference. Wanamaker explained that he was "never more alive in his life,"

and added, with a twinkle in his eye, "The fact is, I have here a note asking me to make an appointment in 1926."<sup>1</sup> Following his usual habit, Wanamaker had postponed the southern trip. He did not leave for Florida until January 18. Before the end of April, he was back in his office, and took up his work with the old-time energy and zest.

Wanamaker's last days were not different from the days that had gone before. In the activities of the spring and summer of 1922 there is no trace of slowing down, of diminished mental vigor. He was early at work, and stayed late. He saw hosts of people and kept up with his correspondence. He made his periodic visits to the New York store. He found time for Bethany problems and the Penny Savings Bank. He enjoyed as keenly as ever his editorial writing. He worked on matters of the Board of Education. He gave his usual luncheon to the directors of the Lord's Day Alliance. He did not refuse invitations to speak.

We find him accepting election as vice-moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia on May 1, and on May 6 the presidency of the Huguenot Society, which conferred upon him the Huguenot Cross. On August 10, at the inauguration of WOO, the radio broadcasting station of the Philadelphia store, he spoke before the microphone with force and humor, recalling the early days of the electrical era and his first association with Edison.<sup>2</sup> He was deeply inter-

<sup>1</sup> Later wire dispatches from the South explained the report. Whitney Wesley Wanamaker, a South Carolina planter, had died at a Miami hotel, and the undertaker, in mistake, announced the death of John Wanamaker.

<sup>2</sup> He began: "We are here to-night to do exactly what the Scriptures request: 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; for He hath done marvelous things.' From the beginning God planted these wonders in the air and sky, dedicated to man's use, hid them, perhaps to give him the joy of discovering them, and finally placed in his hands the glowing torch of science to reveal them." He went on to tell of his visits to the young experimenter at Menlo Park and of the installation of the first electric lights in his store in 1877. He promised daily weather reports and time signals from Arlington, and ended up with a ringing declaration of faith in the new means of communication that he had done so much to encourage: "We regard the radio as an added instrument of great patriotic and civic power, to help to move the nation as well as the city in the right direction."

ected in the completion of the painting of the Guildhall Coronation ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

On Monday afternoon, September 18, he presided at the monthly meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The next morning he got up at five and took the train to New York at seven o'clock. After his normal busy day there he returned to Philadelphia, and went to the Grace Presbyterian Church, where he presided at the installation of a new pastor. The next day he developed a cold, but refused, as usual, to rest. He coughed a great deal Wednesday night and slept very little. Despite noticeable fatigue, he went to his office on Thursday, September 21, and kept steadily at work until the middle of the afternoon, when his physician persuaded him to go home to rest.

Wanamaker would not admit that he was ill, and he had no thought of dying. Only the occasional coughing spells, which annoyed him and which he wanted to get rid of, made him consent to stay at home. As week after week of confinement to the house followed, he did not lose his cheerfulness and his interest in things, he kept right on thinking and planning for the future, and by a constant effort of the will he showed no impatience because his body seemed no longer able to carry him along in the way he had, in his mind, determined to go. Just when he thought he was improving, violent coughing would set him back. Cheerfully would he start all over again to win back his strength. From Lindenhurst he was brought in to his

<sup>1</sup> In appreciation of the hospitality shown him at the time of the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary, when he was a guest of the Lord Mayor, Wanamaker commissioned J. H. Bacon to paint the scene of the Guildhall reception. Bacon's death and the World War delayed the completion of the canvas. It was taken up by Mr. S. J. Solomon in the spring of 1922. With the aid of the King and Queen, Princess Mary, and the Prince of Wales, the artist was enabled to bridge the gap of more than ten years, and Wanamaker had the satisfaction of knowing during his last illness that the painting had been accepted by the City of London and hung in the Guildhall.

town house at 2032 Walnut Street, and bulletins were issued in the middle of November stating that he was on the road to recovery. This encouraging condition lasted until December 10, when it was believed that his cold was over and that things were taking a turn for the better.

But on the morning of December 12, 1922, the physicians issued the following bulletin:

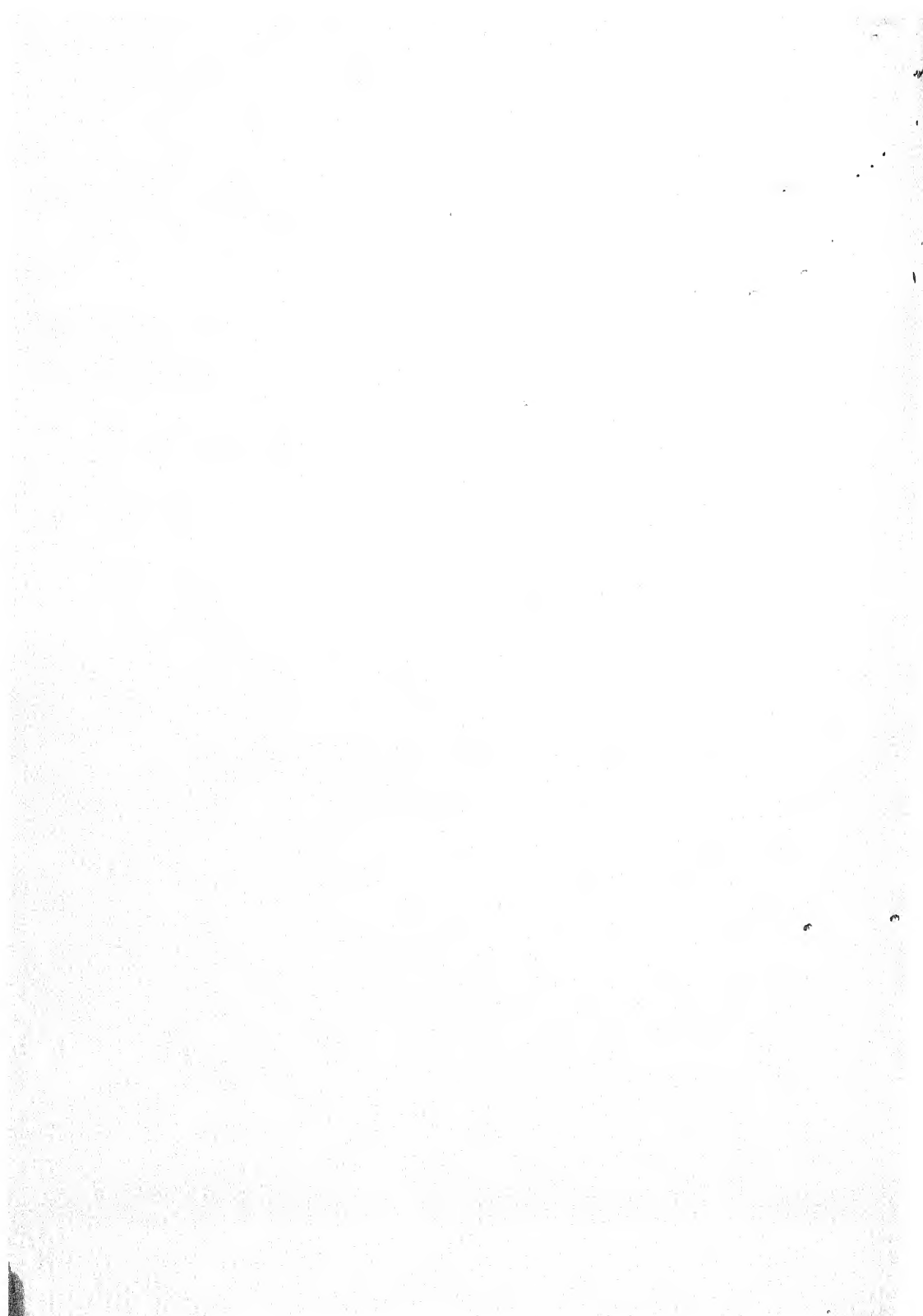
Mr. Wanamaker died at eight o'clock this morning, quietly and without suffering, from heart failure, induced by a short but violent coughing spell. He had slept well throughout the night, after having been distinctly brighter and stronger than usual the preceding day. His cough had not been troublesome for days, and had, apparently, ceased to be a factor in his condition. The heart action had from time to time given cause for anxiety, but had recently improved markedly. It, however, proved unequal to the strain of coughing and failed suddenly. He rapidly became unconscious and continued to sink until the end.

The statement of his physicians shows that John Wanamaker died as he had lived, gamely. His inflexible will never failed him. His last days were marked, as all his life had been, by quiet humor and strong faith. He worried about nothing. He had no doubts. Constant struggles and many and deep sorrows had faced him through the years, but he had always been like a child in finding life a radiant adventure.

He once said that it was his ambition to be worthy of the epitaph on Oliver Goldsmith's tombstone, "He touched nothing that he did not adorn." In repeating this epitaph Wanamaker had written: "What more on earth can any human being ask for?"

THE END

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The life of John Wanamaker was so intimately interwoven with the fabric of his times that virtually everything written about the political and social and economic history of the United States since 1850 could be said to throw light upon his activities. His business and political career and his religious interests touched almost every outstanding movement and event in the life of Philadelphia since before the Civil War and in the life of New York since 1896. He was a power in national politics since the Harrison campaign of 1888. In the evolution of religious organizations he was a pioneer and remained an active force, as he did in the evolution of retail merchandising since 1860. His influence was decisive and permanent in the development of modern advertising, and he is therefore in a very real sense one of the creators of the contemporary newspaper, and also of the periodicals of our age. Of the three American merchants who created what is perhaps erroneously called the department store, he alone lived to continue his pioneering until department stores became what they are to-day. More than any other one man in the United States he is responsible for the introduction in this country of what great merchants of Paris and London contributed to the evolution of the department store, not only in business methods, but in the radical change of relations between seller and buyer, between employer and employee. He was a revolutionary factor in the development of postal communications. His fertile brain and bold and vivid imagination and vision gave him a unique place among the collaborators of Bell, Edison, Ford, and Marconi. The Young

Men's Christian Association and Sunday school, as we have these organizations to-day, owe more than can be estimated to his leadership.

No bibliography, therefore, inserted as an appendix to the life of John Wanamaker, could claim to be comprehensive, much less to be complete. Hundreds of volumes that we cannot mention have been consulted on one point or another, although some of them contain a great deal directly about John Wanamaker's influence and creative work. Especially is this true in the great field of merchandising, advertising, and industrial relations. We can only hope to publish later our bibliography of the evolution of retail merchandising in the United States since 1860. Here we have to be content with giving a list of the sources, primary and secondary, for the life of the man and the growth of his stores.

It was thought unwise to load the pages of the biography with copious footnote references. But the authority for every statement made and the quotations—very often in Wanamaker's own handwriting—are preserved on fifteen thousand cards, thoroughly indexed and classified, which the biographer has given to Mr. Rodman Wanamaker. This file includes a bibliography of nine hundred titles.

#### SOURCE MATERIAL

*Ancestry.*—Records in archives of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, at Flemington and Trenton; rolls of Revolutionary War in office of Adjutant General of New Jersey; Pennsylvania archives at Harrisburg; records in County Court House at Warsaw, Indiana; records of Dayton, Ohio; Published documents listed under genealogy; statements in MS. notes, in letters from relatives to John Wanamaker; interviews and correspondence of the biographer; family papers and portraits.

*Early life.*—Diaries of John Wanamaker, Sr.; Nelson Wanamaker's rent book; old family letters; statements gathered from John Wanamaker's letters, interviews, and speeches; visitation books of John A. Neff;

- pledge and account books of John Wanamaker; and a large number of letters written at various times to John Wanamaker from old friends, giving their reminiscences.
- 1860-1876—Account books, letters, and later statements of John Wanamaker; advertisements of Oak Hall and first Chestnut Street Store; MS. accounts of trip abroad in 1871; correspondence between John Wanamaker and William Libbey of A. T. Stewart & Co.; Bethany Church papers; subscription books and papers relating to Finance Committee of Centennial Exposition; reminiscences of employees and friends concerning Oak Hall, the old P. R. R. Freight Depot, the first trip abroad, the Moody and Sankey meetings, and the preparation for opening the Grand Depot.
- 1876-1889—Correspondence and papers preserved in private files; newspaper cuttings; store publications; Bethany papers of various kinds; statements of friends and employees; John Wanamaker's own MS reminiscences of these years; R. C. Ogden's papers in the Library of Congress.
- 1889-1893—Four annual reports as Postmaster-General; newspaper cuttings; private correspondence; letters of Benjamin Harrison, Levi P. Morton, General Clarkson, Senators Quay and Cameron, and Philadelphia friends and political associates; MS. account and itinerary of Presidential transcontinental trip.
- 1893-1903—Papers and correspondence in private files; newspaper cuttings; political and other speeches; newspaper interviews; Bethany papers; diary of trip to India; mass of MS. notes, bills, cards, letters, relating to experiences in Europe and Asia.
- 1903-1922—Private files in the Philadelphia office, in one hundred and eight drawers, contain a virtually complete record of John Wanamaker's business, religious, and public life from 1903 to the day of his death. Every activity, inside the stores and outside, is revealed in detail in these papers. Nothing is lacking. They contain also a vast amount of material for all the years before 1903; but they are complete only from 1903 on. Carbon copies of John Wanamaker's answers are attached to important letters, or they contain in penciled notes in his own handwriting on their face the answers he desired made. Meetings with his administrative staff, his principal buyers, his architects, and with many outsiders who came to interview him about his business and religious activities, or to get from his own lips an account of his life, are preserved in the form of transcripts of stenographic notes. Forty scrapbooks record newspaper comment on John Wanamaker, extending back into the early 'eighties, but complete from 1889 to 1893, and from 1903 to 1922. All his speeches of this later period were typewritten and indexed and

made into bound volumes. From 1912 until his death daily editorials were written for the store advertisements. Very many of his public speeches and Bethany talks are preserved in his own hand. In addition, from 1903 to 1920 diaries and personal letters give a graphic and minute day-by-day account of what John Wanamaker did and thought. They are especially colorful in recounting his adventures abroad; and they are of the utmost value in giving the story of the new buildings in Philadelphia and New York and the great panic of 1907 and the additional blow that came through the death of Thomas B. Wanamaker, following shortly after the retirement of the son and Robert C. Ogden through ill health. Correspondence with real-estate operators in New York, and his own minute notes and figures, give the story of how the block on which the new building stands was assembled, and other interesting real-estate operations in New York.

#### BOOKS AND ARTICLES BY JOHN WANAMAKER

- Miscellaneous Addresses (May 12, 1902, to December 31, 1921) 2 vols., 436 pp.; 310 pp. MS.
- The Evolution of Mercantile Business. An address at the annual meeting of 1900 of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. *Annals*, May, 1900. Reprinted as chapter in *Modern Merchandising*, Vol. I.
- Hearings Before the Industrial Commission: Conditions of Capital and Labor. Washington, 1900. (Wanamaker's testimony is contained on pages 450-468.)
- The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute—A Store School. In *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1909, pp. 151-155.
- Address Before the Wanamaker Business Club. Philadelphia, 1909. Published by the Club.
- Life of Isaiah Williamson. Philadelphia, 1908. 79 pp. MS.
- The German Colonists. In *The Pennsylvania German* for January, 1909 (Vol. 10, No. 1).
- Recreation Fosters Efficiency. *Independent*, November 30, 1914.
- Lest We Forget. An interwoven chronology of American history and the Wanamaker business. Appeared in the *Red Book* of 1899, and reprinted in the store's "A Short History of the United States," 1904 or 1905.
- The Business Man's Ideal. *Red and Blue*, February, 1912.
- Training Boys for Retail Career. *Dry Goods Economist*, April, 1912.
- My Measure of Success. *System*, October, 1913. Used, with full page

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- Sales Training Methods. In Vol. IV of same series.
- Bringing Business Efficiency into Christian Service. *Sunday School Times*, October 14, 1914.
- Postal Savings Reserve for Ships. *The Nation's Business*, October 15, 1914.
- The George Williams I knew. *Association Men*, October, 1921.
- Observations in India. *Missionary Review*, September, 1902 (Address at Presbyterian General Assembly, 1902).
- A Burning Lamp Lit Fifty Years Ago: Glimpses of the early days, by the one who brought the *Sunday School Times* and H. Clay Trumbull together. Golden Jubilee number of *Sunday School Times*, January 2, 1909.
- Eight People Who Have Helped Me. *Friendly Hand from Across the Sea*, August, 1899.
- Mother's Day in the Sunday School. *Pennsylvania Herald*, June, 1908.
- Good Times are Near. *The Right Angle*, December, 1921.
- Business Outlook for 1922. *Poor Richard's Almanac*, January, 1922.
- John Wanamaker on Life Insurance. San Francisco, 1891. 16 pp.
- On Life Insurance. Address at National Association of Life Underwriters banquet, Philadelphia, October 25, 1895. *United States Review*, October, 1895.
- Address before the Fidelity Leaders' Convention, Philadelphia, September 10, 1913. Published by Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company.
- Founder's Day Address: To His Business Family on the Occasion of Opening the First Section of the New Building in Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1906. 95 pp.
- Annals of the Wanamaker System: Its Origin, its Principles, its Methods, and its Development in This and Other Cities. Philadelphia. 48 pp. (This was republished in many editions and formats, either separately, or as a part of larger booklets, during many years.)
- Addresses in connection with the New York and Philadelphia Store buildings and celebrations, including the 1911 Jubilee speeches. These are contained in the Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores. 2 vols. Profusely illustrated. Philadelphia, 1911.
- Mission Work at Bethany. Philadelphia, 1870. 51 pp.
- Who Rang the Bell? *Bethany Gleaner*, May, 1887.
- An Argument in Support of the Limited Post and Telegraph, by the Postmaster-General, Together with Certain Appendices Relating to Postal Telegraphy. Washington, 1890. 223 pp.
- Additional Argument by the Postmaster-General in Favor of the Establish-

- ment of Postal Savings Depositories, with Appendices. Washington, 1892. 71 pp.
- Postal Laws and Regulations. Washington, 1893.
- Reports of the Postmaster-General. Washington, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892.
- Benjamin Harrison. *Independent*, March 21, 1901.
- Maxims of Life and Business. First published privately in 1916. Republished, with introduction by Russell H. Conwell. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1923. (Japanese translation by J. Iseki. Tokio, 1924.)
- Prayers of John Wanamaker. F. H. Reyell Co., New York, 1923. 159 pp. A. Gordon MacLennan, editor.
- Prayers at Bethany Chapel. New York, 1925, 144 pp. A. Gordon MacLennan, editor.
- Address to Business Men's League of Philadelphia, May 14, 1897. *Public Opinion*, May 27, 1897 (with editorial comment from ten widely scattered newspapers).
- Speeches of John Wanamaker in the Gubernatorial Campaign. Philadelphia, 1898. (Published by the Business Men's League.) Address to the Business Men's League.
- Tour of the President to the Pacific Coast, April 14, to May 16, 1891. Itinerary, with map of United States outlining the trip. (Published privately by Mr. Wanamaker for the convenience of the President and his party.)
- Extracts from John Wanamaker's speeches while Postmaster-General in Charles Hedges' Compilation of the Speeches of Benjamin Harrison New York, 1892. 580 pages.

(Mr. Wanamaker was also a prolific writer on mercantile principles and the particular policies of his stores. These articles appeared in newspapers and in various forms of store advertising, such as anniversary bulletins, pamphlets, guides, booklets issued for special occasions, the Red Books, and the Golden Book. It is not always certain that everything of this nature bearing his signature was actually written by him. Only what we know to be his own is listed above. It is impracticable to include all the magazine articles. He wrote frequently on his travel impressions and on religious subjects in the various publications of Bethany Church, notably the *Bethany Gleaner*, the *Living Link*, and the *Friendly Hand From Across the Sea*; and also in the *Sunday School Times*, the *Pennsylvania Herald*, and the *Lord's Day Leader*. Articles in the *Christian Endeavor World*, the *War Cry* (Salvation Army), and many other religious newspapers and

periodicals are also attributed to him. A great deal of this kind of writing it is impossible to trace and identify.)

#### BOOKS AND ARTICLES ABOUT JOHN WANAMAKER

- The only biography published is "The Romantic Rise of a Great American" (New York, 1924. 250 pp.), by John Wanamaker's old friend, Dr. Russell H. Conwell.

Numerous magazine articles have appeared, the most important of which are:

- BOLTON, SARAH K. John Wanamaker. *Wide Awake*, January, 1884.
- BOOTH, COMMANDER EVANGELINE. A Tribute. *War Cry*, January 6, 1923.
- BROWN, THOMPSON. From Messenger Boy to Merchant Prince—A Romance of Business. *Our Day*, September, 1897.
- CARPENTER, FRANK G. A Talk with John Wanamaker. Syndicated Sunday article, October 17, 1897.
- CLARK, FRANCIS E. Best Known Name in America. *Christian Endeavor World*, May 29, 1919. (Dr. Clark's "Memories of Many Men in Many Lands" gives reminiscences of John Wanamaker.)
- CROLL, P. C. John Wanamaker, Merchant and Philanthropist. *Pennsylvania-German*, January, 1908.
- ELLIS, WILLIAM T. John Wanamaker, Gave Sunday to Church and Sunday School. *North American*, December 30, 1922.
- FARIS, JOHN T. The Errand Boy Who Changed Business Customs. *Onward*, October 9, 1913.
- GLEED, CHARLES A. Captains of Industry: John Wanamaker. *Cosmopolitan*, May, 1902.
- GORGAN, JOHN B. A Modern Business General. *National Magazine*, October, 1914.
- GRASER, FERDINAND H. John Wanamaker's Anti-Quay Campaign. *New Voice*, February 4, 1899.
- HAIRE, ALPHONSUS P. The Conquerors of Business. *System*, October, 1907.
- HOWE, J. OLIN. Unique Writings of John Wanamaker. *Dearborn Independent*, March 17, 1923.
- JONES, H. S. A Short Sketch of a Busy Life. *Pennsylvania-German*, January, 1908. (This is exceedingly important, because Mr. Jones was Mr. Wanamaker's friend and faithful secretary during the middle period of his career.)
- O'FLAHERTY, JAMES. Big Men in the Retail Game: I.—John Wanamaker. *Chips from the Blarney Stone*, January, 1912.
- PEARCE, McLEOD M. A Sunday School Boy Who Became Merchant Prince. *Young People's Paper*, April 8, 1923.

- POGUE, ROBERT. Mr. Wanamaker's Bible Class—Its History and Methods. *Michigan Sunday School Advance*, September, 1905.  
Mr. Wanamaker at Prayer. *Sunday School Times*, January 7, 1923.
- RICE, DR. EDWIN W. Mr. Wanamaker as I knew Him. *Sunday School World*, March, 1923.
- RILEY, IDA E. Biography of Mr. Wanamaker in "Famous Living Americans," Green Castle, Ind., 1915.
- SANGSTER, MARGARET E. John Wanamaker at Eighty: A Personal Interview. *Christian Herald*, June 26, 1918.
- SEILHAMER, GEORGE O. Biographical Sketch in "Men of Mark in Philadelphia," contributed to Young's Memorial History of Philadelphia, New York, 1898.
- SPARKS, EDWIN EARLE. Worth While Americans. Milton, Pa., 1921.  
(This is a school textbook with chapter, "The Messenger Boy and the Merchant Prince," pp. 151-65.)
- STEWART, JANE A. Bethany and Its Founder. *Home Herald*, October 21, 1908.  
John Wanamaker's Eight Decades. *Christian Endeavor World*, July 11, 1918.
- THORNE, WILLIAM HENRY. How Wanamaker Missed the Presidency. *Globe*, June, 1901. (A contemptuous and unfriendly review of John Wanamaker's political career by a former clergyman, who became a newspaper writer.)
- THORNLEY, BETTY D. And the Merchant Princes Moved—Saving the Eldest Prince of Them All, Who insisted that New York go South—and New York Did. *Vogue*, January, 1923.
- TRUMBULL, CHARLES G. When Young John Wanamaker Went to Prayer Meeting. *Sunday School Times*, October 10, 1914.  
Some Memories of John Wanamaker. *Sunday School Times*, December 30, 1922.
- WHITE, REV. WILLIAM T., and SCOTT, WILLIAM H. The Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1895. (J. W.'s Church activities are referred to on pages 49, 133-5, 277-83, 297-8, 299-300.)
- WILLETS, GILSON. A Sunday With John Wanamaker. *Christian Herald*, August 29, 1906.
- YOUNG, REV. S. EDWARD. John Wanamaker as Religious Workers See Him. *New York Observer*, November 23, 1911.
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Constance, Switzerland, June 21, 1903; *Green Years* (Seoul, Korea), February, 1923; *Dry Goods Economist*, November 4, 1899, March 25, 1911, and December 16, 1922; *Current Opinion*, March, 1922, and February, 1923; *American Insurance Union Magazine*, December, 1922; *Annals Am. Acad. Pol. and Soc. Sc.*, March, 1902, and May, 1906; *Architectural Record*, March and June, 1911; *Arena*, August, 1899, and January to March, 1905; *Bellman*, December 30, 1911; *British Warehouseman*, May 15, 1899 ("John Wanamaker, the Whitley of America," with portrait); *Central Christian Advocate*, January 14, 1914; *The Christian* (London), February, 1924; *Christian Endeavor World*, June 15, 1911; *Dry Goods Chronicle*, November, 1896; *Eastern Underwriter*, June 6, 1924; *Everybody's*, September, 1907; *Floral Life*, August, 1903; *Furniture Trade Review*, November, 1896; *Furniture World*, November 2, 1911; *Gardeners' Chronicle*, May, 1920, and May and June, 1922; *Gospel Messenger*, Edinburgh, Vol. 38, No. 452; *House Beautiful*, March, 1912; *Independent*, February 7, 1916, and June 19, 1920; *Insurance Field* (Louisville), September, 1913; *Keystone* (Masonic Weekly), September 3, 1904; *Leidsche Courant* (Holland), January 4, 1915; *Leslie's Weekly*, February 15, 1912; *Moody's Magazine*, February, 1914; *Musical America*, November 11, 1916; *Musical Courier Extra*, July 26, 1902, April 13, August 17, September 8, 1917; *Nankwaino Hikari* (Japan), spring of 1915; *Nation*, June 11, July 2, and July 16, 1891 (attack on John Wanamaker for part in Keystone Bank affair); *Neva* (St. Petersburg), October 4, 1909; *New Era Magazine*, September, 1921; *Newspaperdom*, April 25, 1918; *Odd Fellows' Siftings*, September, 1911; *Old Bullion* (Chemical Bank of New York), February 25, 1922; *Pennsylvania Herald*, January, 1923; *Pottery and Glass*, April and November, 1911; *Praeco Latinus*, November, 1899; *Printers' Ink*, May 1, 1901, and October 31, 1912; *Public Ledger* (Monthly Retail Edition), October 8, 1918; *Publishers' Weekly*, December, 1922; *Satire*, May 25, 1912; *Saturday Evening Post*, September, 1900, and November 26, 1921; *School and Society*, April 15, 1916; *Success*, August, 1900 (Mr. Wanamaker in colors on cover as a young man delivering merchandise in wheelbarrow); *Sunday School Work* (Nashville, Tenn.), December 15, 1906; *Sunday School Worker*, February, 1920; *Sunday School World*, March, 1923; *System*, October, 1907, October, 1913; *World Retailer*, June, 1920; *University of Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin*, January, April, May, 1901.

In 1921 the committee of Philadelphians, headed by the mayor, which arranged the celebration in honor of Mr. Wanamaker's sixty years in business, issued a booklet bound in morocco, giving an account of the "Testimonial Luncheon to John Wanamaker by His Fellow Citizens, April 26, 1921." This contains a photograph and has a chronological page of the high lights in his life, which is headed "Milestones."

PUBLICATIONS OF WANAMAKER & BROWN, JOHN WANAMAKER & Co., THE  
GRAND DEPOT, AND THE WANAMAKER STORES  
IN PHILADELPHIA AND NEW YORK

These run into hundreds of titles. All of them are interesting to the student of modern advertising methods. But we list only those that are important from the historical point of view:

*Everybody's Journal.* This was the title of a paper published when Wanamaker was a boy, and was revived as the name of the monthly bulletin of Wanamaker & Brown in the late seventies and the early eighties. In 1899, John Wanamaker founded *Everybody's Magazine*, which he sold after four years.

*Methods of Business of the Largest Establishment in the World for the Manufacture and Sale of Men's Wear.* Philadelphia, 1876. Printed at our own steam-power printing office. One million copies distributed gratuitously." (This was the first of what afterwards came to be called the Red Books, which were issued from time to time up to 1909.)

*Catalogue and Guide for Shopping by Mail.* Philadelphia, 1879. 89 pp. Ill.

*Book News Monthly.* Started August 30, 1881. Discontinued August, 1918.

*What Is the Best Way to Wait on a Customer?* 1882. (Prize essays.)

*Philadelphia Store News.* Vol. I, No. I of this publication was in September, 1883. It was discontinued after a short time, but was revived; and the name was used long afterwards in the full page advertisements in the newspapers.

*Oak Hall Advertising Sketches. How They May be Used by Other Advertisers.* 1884. 129 pp.

*A Souvenir of the Constitutional Centennial.* 1887.

*Three September Days.* 1887.

*Inspectors' Manual.* 1890. 52 pp.

*Exposition Journal.* Weekly from September to November, 1889.

*A Little Handbook of Philadelphia Together With Certain Annals of the Wanamaker System.* Philadelphia and New York, 1899. 52 pp. Ill.

*Dewey Days.* New York, 1899.

*Curlyhead's Dickery-Docks; Curlyhead's Sandman.* (Ill.) Phila., 1900 and 1901.

*Guide to Philadelphia and the Wanamaker Store.* With large map. 1901—reprinted in successive years.

*A Short History of the United States: With an Interwoven Chronology of the John Wanamaker Business, Together with Other Historical*

- and Economic Data. Published by Philadelphia Store in 1904.  
• Later editions.
- Anniversary Herald*. Published for many years in the month of March, beginning with 1904. (This is sometimes called *Wanamaker Herald*.)
- A Short History of the French Revolution. Philadelphia, 1906. 32 pp.  
With reproductions of portraits and other objects in the Wanamaker collection.
- Flags of America: From the Time of Columbus to the Present Day. Philadelphia, 1907. 24 pp. Ill. in color.
- The Wanamaker House of Artistic Suggestion, by Elbert Hubbard. New York, 1907. 32 pp.
- Helpful Hints for Business Helpers, by Elbert Hubbard. East Aurora, New York, 1907.
- A Dozen and Two Pastels in Prose, by Elbert Hubbard. East Aurora, New York, 1907.
- Wanamaker Primers. "Philadelphia." "The Rule of Four." "The North American Indian." "Hiawatha Produced in Life." "Abraham Lincoln." These were published in many large editions from 1908 to 1911.
- The Old A. T. Stewart Building and the New Wanamaker's an Exclusive Store for Women. New York, 1908. 16 pp.
- Jubilee Night: A Personal Tribute to the Honorable John Wanamaker by His Entire Business Family. Philadelphia, 1911. 48 pp.
- Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores. Philadelphia, 1911-13. 2 vols. Ill.
- The Wanamaker 1912 Safeguards and Aids to Health. (The only general store manual in the extensive list of the United States Department of Labor bibliography of books and periodicals on accident and disease prevention in industry.)
- Safeguards and Aids to the Well-being of Employees. Philadelphia and New York, October, 1913. 27 full page illustrations.
- A Friendly Guide Book to Philadelphia. Several editions, beginning in 1914.
- The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute. Philadelphia, 1915. 72 pp. Ill.
- Manual of Commands for Use in Instruction and Reference Prepared for the Cadets of the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute. Philadelphia and New York, 1916. 64 pp.
- Furniture: The Story of a Great Industry and a Great Sale. Philadelphia, 1917. 24 pp.
- The World's Greatest Organ. Philadelphia (Second edition), 1917.

- Members of the Wanamaker Store Family in the War Service. Philadelphia and New York, 1918. 48 pp.
- The John Wanamaker Store Army. Philadelphia, 1918.
- The Meadowbrook Club Year Book. Philadelphia, 1921. 238 pp. Ill. (This has been issued annually, as well as a year book of the Millrose Club in New York.)
- Broadcasting the World's Greatest Organ. Philadelphia, 1922. 16 pp. Ill.
- Visitors' Guide to Wanamaker Store. Philadelphia, 1922. Ill.
- Centennial Book of the John Wanamaker New York Store (Formerly A. T. Stewart, 1823-1923, and a Tercentenary Review of New York City 1626-1926). New York, 1923. 95 pp. Second edition 1924.
- Wanamaker Firsts: 1838-1924, Philadelphia, 1924. 93 pp. (A list of "firsts," compiled from ms. sources, appeared in the New York papers on April 5, 1924.)
- The Wanamaker Home Budget Service, Including Furnishing Out of Income upon Establishing of Credit. New York, 1924. Sixth edition. 32 pp.
- The Observances of Mourning. New York and Philadelphia. 32 pp.
- How to Care for the Baby: Suggestions for Young Mothers.
- Historic Periods in China and Objects of Art Belonging to Them. New York and Philadelphia, 1924.
- Tercentenary Book, John Wanamaker, New York, inaugurating the new Wanamaker building and a Tercentenary Pictorial Pageant of New York—The Titan City. New York, October, 1925—64 pages; second edition in November; third edition in January, 1926.

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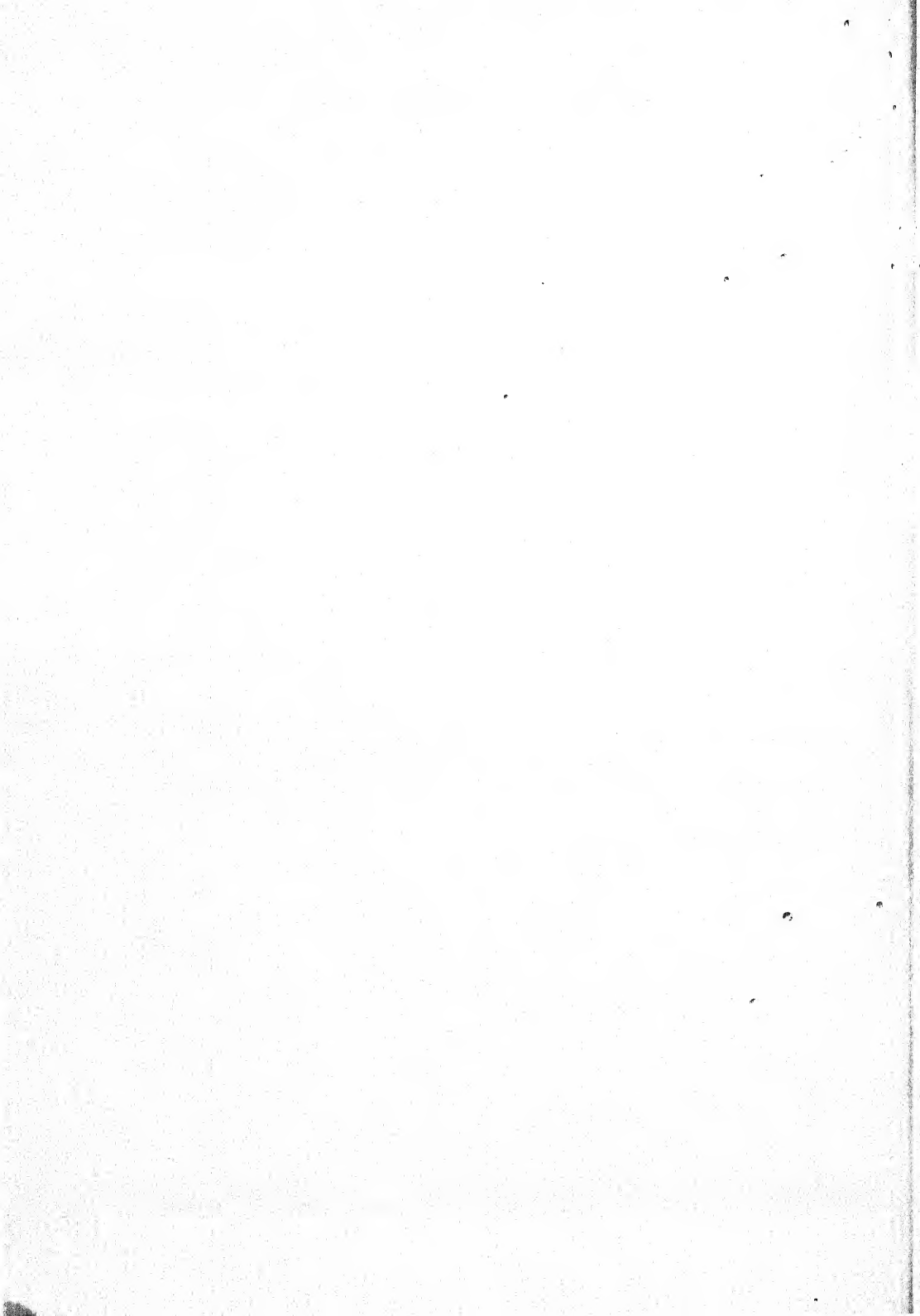
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- Culin, Stewart. A Summer Trip Among the Western Indians: The Wanamaker Expedition. Philadelphia, 1901.
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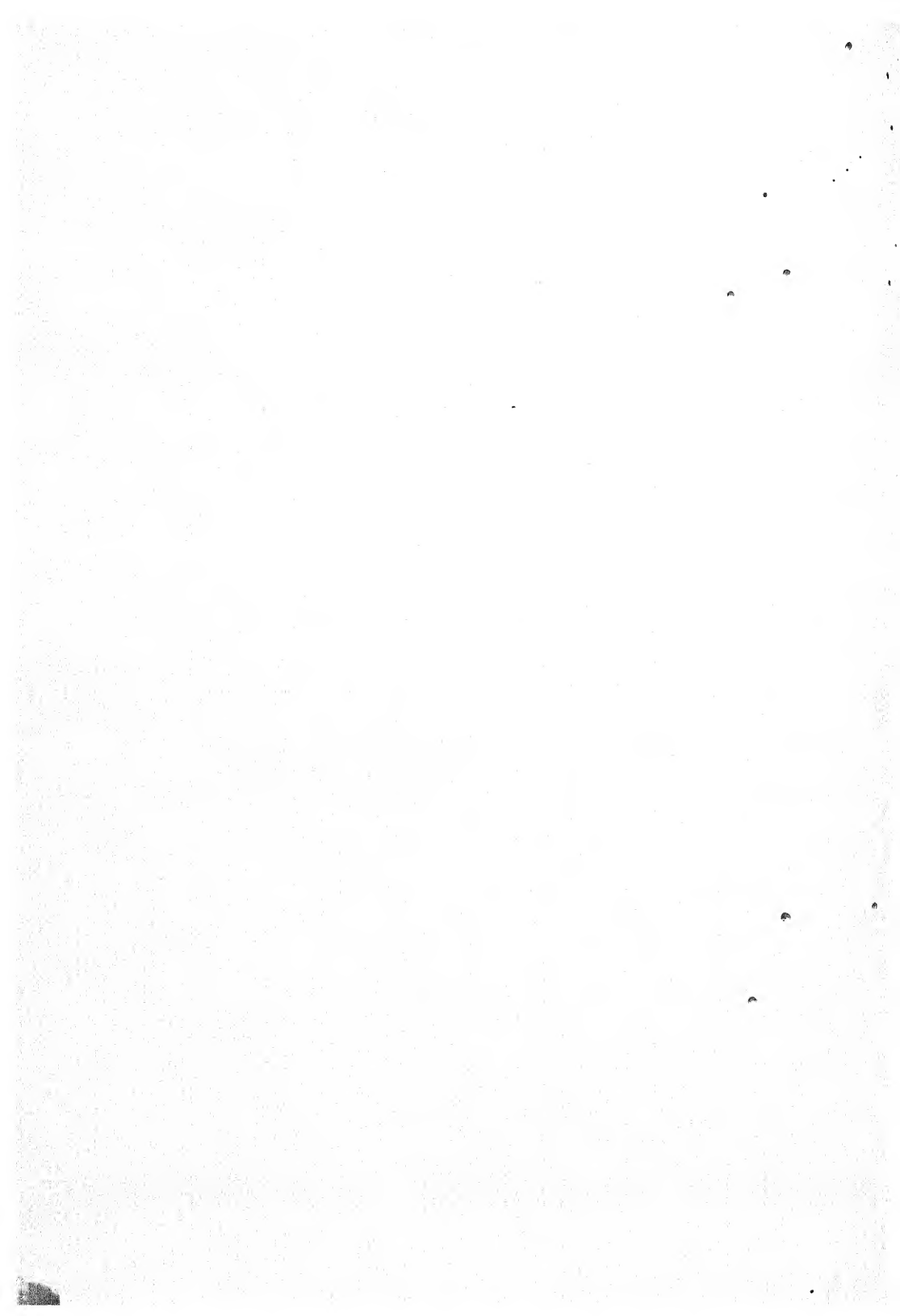
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